

Friday April 5 1996

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Algeria J 1.00	Jordan JO 1.25	Romania R 1.00
Algeria K 1.00	Kazakhstan KZ 1.00	Saudi Arabia R 1.00
Algeria L 1.00	Latvia LV 2.00	South Africa Z 1.00
Algeria M 1.00	Lithuania LT 1.00	Spain P 2.00
Algeria N 1.00	Malta MT 0.40	Sweden S 2.00
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Algeria T 1.00		Zimbabwe Z\$ 2.00

The Guardian

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46,519

Music and books for the holiday weekend

Review

Plus: Samuel Beckett, Milan Kundera, God

Bigger all the time

Why all the world loves Gulliver

Black power

The changing face of indie music

Bomb maker caught say FBI

Ian Katz in New York

THE FBI appeared to have solved the 18-year Unabomber case yesterday as a former Berkeley mathematics professor suspected of being the technophobic serial bomber was charged with possessing the components for an explosive device.

Theodore Kaczynski, aged 53, appeared in court in Helena, Montana, 24 hours after agents arrested him when he had resisted a search of his tiny wooden cabin in a remote area of the state.

Prosecutors say the agents found a partially assembled bomb inside the shack where Mr Kaczynski has lived as a recluse since the early 1970s. Last night, he was being held in federal custody.

Although the bearded figure led through a throng of reporters bore little resemblance to the sketch produced after the Unabomber's only known sighting in 1987, agents are convinced he is the lone terrorist whose devices have killed three people and maimed 23 others.

Justice department sources said Mr Kaczynski was being charged with an offence unrelated to the Unabomber attacks, so that he could be held while agents continue investigations. The United States attorney general, Janet Reno, would say only: "We have much to do yet."

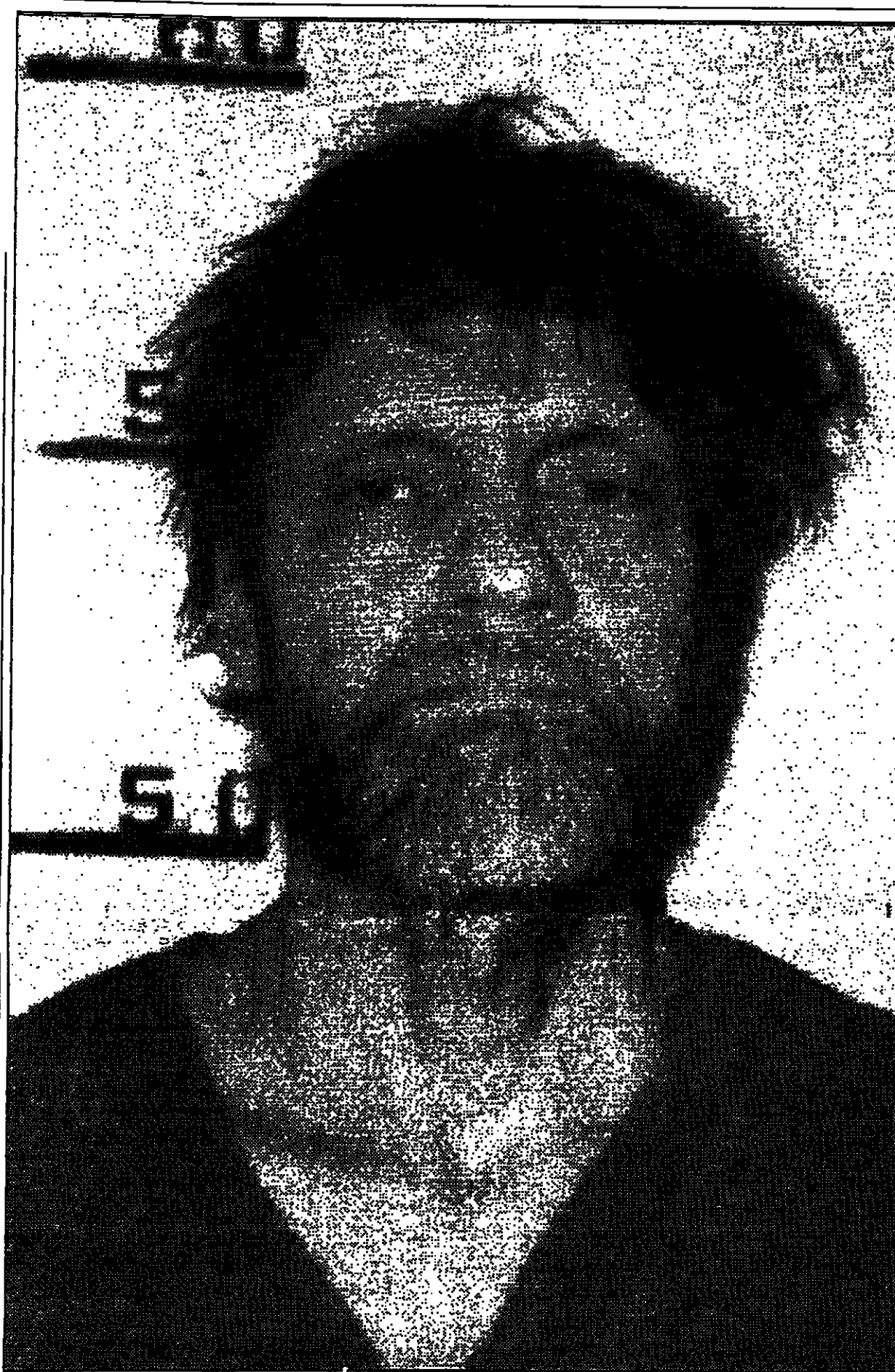
Among the questions agents have to resolve is how Mr Kaczynski could have travelled from Montana to the areas where several of the devices were posted. He does not have a car and travels around Lincoln, Montana, on a bicycle.

The investigation of his cabin was also being hampered by fears that it could be booby-trapped. "We have an explosives ordinance team X-raying everything before we can touch it," said one agent.

The Unabomber, so-called because his earliest targets were associated with universities and airlines, has confounded investigators during an 18-year campaign.

He is believed to be an expert bomb-maker who crafted devices from household items.

Luddite's downfall, page 2



Theodore Kaczynski, the 53-year-old suspected Unabomber, after his arrest on Wednesday

Blair in row on seat for rebel MP

Patrick Wintour, Chief Political Correspondent

SPECULATION is mounting inside the Labour Party that Tony Blair is planning to impose the former Tory MP, Alan Howarth, on a plum Labour mining seat in Yorkshire, in spite of objections by the local party.

Mr Howarth, who quit the Tory party in a blaze of publicity last October, has already sent 500 copies of a five-page CV to the Wentworth constituency party. In the document he says he would be proud to represent the seat.

It is widely acknowledged among the party leadership that it would send a poor message to wavering Tory voters if New Labour was unable to reward Mr Howarth's courageous decision to quit the Tories by finding him a parliamentary seat, although it would require a rule change as he has not been a Labour Party member for two years.

Kath Roden, vice-chairwoman of the 500-plus Wentworth party, said yesterday her general committee had agreed unanimously to write back to Mr Howarth, telling him it did not want anything to do with him, pointing out that all Labour candidates are required to be party members for two years.

Ms Roden said yesterday there would be rebellion on the leadership's hands if they tried to impose Mr Howarth. "People up here do not trust him. He comes from a safe Tory seat and what is to say he would not go back to one?"

"He was a member of the Conservative Party when the Government took on the miners and made no complaint. There is 70 to 80 per cent unemployment on estates up here with 26-year-olds never



even seeing a job." Mr Howarth was campaigning in the Staffordshire South-East byelection yesterday. The prospects of a further byelection before the General Election, so giving a chance for Mr Howarth to be imposed as the candidate by the party's National Executive, are receding.

Speculation that Mr Howarth is being groomed for Wentworth intensified in the party after the NEC agreed to make the Wentworth selection the last of the Labour safe seats to start the lengthy shortlisting and balloting process. Selection is now unlikely to begin until late autumn. Mr Blair has said he now expects a general election in the autumn.

Peter Hardy, the current Wentworth MP, announced last year he was retiring at the election, bequeathing a 23,449 majority, the second safest Labour seat.

Selections in a string of safe

seats in Yorkshire and the North have been delayed as a byproduct of local hostility to the imposition of all-women shortlists. The policy was ruled unlawful by an industrial tribunal in January.

The Labour NEC has agreed new voluntary guidelines designed to prevent discrimination against women. It also agreed that eight of these seats should be selected in four sequential phases, ensuring the two seats at the back of queue — Wansbeck and Wentworth — cannot begin the 10-week selection process until October or November.

Many of the eight seats have already complained at the delays, but the national party insists the staggered timetable is necessary to ensure regional officials overseeing the legally contentious selections are not overburdened. However, party leaders have in the past used delays to impose talented candidates on difficult constituencies.

Labour has made polling history by becoming the first party to enjoy such an enormous lead over its rivals — and sustaining that lead for the longest period.

According to today's Daily Telegraph, Labour continues to lead the Tories by roughly 30 points, a margin it has maintained since Tony Blair succeeded John Smith as Labour leader in mid-1994.

A Gallup poll of 10,284 voters between February 29 and April 2, shows Labour on 57.3 per cent (up from 55.4 per cent in February), the Tories on 23.9 per cent (25.4) and the Liberal Democrats on 15.1 per cent (14.9).

Inquest infuriates baby's family

Barbie Dutter

AN INQUEST into the death of a child after he was shuttled between four hospitals in one day ended in uproar yesterday, after a verdict that he had died of natural causes.

Relatives of 23-month-old Robert Benton yelled "farce" as the jury foreman delivered the 8-1 majority verdict. One shouted: "I hope your consciences are clear."

Surgeon Joseph Khalil-Marzouk was also barracked by the family at Birmingham coroner's court. They yelled: "[We] just hope he never treats another child."

Robert died last June at Heartlands hospital, in Birmingham, after visiting three other hospitals over an eight-hour period. Sandwell hospital was too busy to see him immediately. Doctors at Good Hope hospital, in Sutton Coldfield, took an X-ray which showed his left lung to be unusually inflated and arranged a transfer to Birmingham children's hospital. But when he arrived, no bed was available. He was eventually admitted as an emergency at Heartlands but died during surgery.

Robert's parents, Julie Benton, aged 32, and Timothy Daves, aged 32, plan to sue the health authorities for alleged negligence. They criticised the coroner's direction that the jury should return a verdict of natural causes.

"What was the point of an inquest when the jury are told what to say?" said Ms



Timothy Daves and Julie Benton plan to sue over the death of their son, Robert, right

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"What was the point of an inquest when the jury are told what to say?" said Ms

Benton, of Rowley Regis, in the West Midlands, who is heavily pregnant with her second child. "It was meant to be a jury decision. He didn't direct them. He misdirected them."

She added: "I don't think we are going to come to terms with it. We don't accept it and you can't come to terms with something you can't accept."

The coroner, Richard Whittington, told the court Robert

had a history of chest infections but was, generally speaking, healthy.

The post mortem examination had shown he died from a double lung collapse caused by an acute bronchial infection. As a result of artificial ventilation during surgery, Robert's diseased lungs had probably torn under the pressure and led to his death.

Doctors had said Robert turn to page 3, column 1

Grunting Finns come to terms with the 0.8 second handshake

Jon Henley in Helsinki

DETERMINED not to be outdone by smooth-talking continentalers since joining the European Union last year, the naturally grunting Finns are scrambling over one another to learn the complex mysteries of EU etiquette.

"It's not our fault we're a bit behind," said Kariina Suonperä, who travels around the country teaching business people Euro-manners, such as cheek-kissing and hand-shaking. "You have to remember that, until 50 years ago, most of us were farmers. But in Europe, people expect something more than a nod and a grunt."

Ms Suonperä said that Finns, long isolated by distance, climate and an all but impenetrable language, are increasingly sensitive to the fact that — abroad at least — courtesy counts.

"It's become quite a boom industry, she said. "My classes are oversubscribed — and the competition's growing by the week."

Ms Suonperä, who gathers course material by heading overseas two or three times a year, said many of her students were unsure how to approach the most basic formalities.

She has developed strict guidelines. A handshake, for example, should last 0.8 seconds and consist of 1.5 shakes. "Only bores and politicians posing for photographs do it for longer," she said.

A kiss on the cheek is more complicated. "I tell them to stand 60 centimetres apart," Ms Suonperä said. "The right hand should then be raised and laid lightly on the other person's upper arm or shoulder, and the cheeks should touch briefly — left, right, and left again."

But even if they have cleared the initial hurdle, deep-rooted reserve still leaves many Finns ill-equipped, says Michael Staunton, an English teacher in Helsinki. "The concept of small-talk is very hard for Finns. In Finland, if you have nothing to say you keep your mouth shut."

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Sketch

'Gutted' Geordies bounce back



Peter Hetherington

CLUTCHING a camera in the cavernous St James's Park souvenir store, Sebastian Chittarini found it hard to contain his excitement as fans streamed past the ping-pong table.

"I have been all around Europe and never seen a place like this," beamed the 19-year-old Parisian, in Newcastle to film and prepare a commentary on success in soccer for his business studies course and hopefully interview the French winger David Ginola.

"What a stadium. I've been to the San Siro and, yes, this is just about as good. And what a game last night. And these fans. So friendly but a bit difficult to understand. Strange accent but so dedicated."

His team, Paris St Germain, second in the French league was one thing — Newcastle United quite another. "They'll do it (win the championship). I'm sure, if they can play like that, magnificent."

Nearby, Tracy Foster, from Gateshead, had just spent £33 on United's maroon and white training strips and souvenirs for her sons Paul, aged six, and Ben, four. "I know it's expensive but the kids love them. They've all got them. It's like a uniform around here."

She was just recovering from the 4-3 defeat by Liverpool after being "devastated" the night before. "I was so cheesed off that I took it out on the kids. You just can't take that tension, but today things seem better."

Ian Murphy, aged 20, a season ticket holder since 1982 — when United were drawing half their current capacity crowds of 36,000 — said the result left him "gutted" — an awful empty feeling in the stomach. There were tears in my eyes. I thought we'd thrown it away but it's another day and, yes, we might just do it."

Behind the store, in the boardroom of the Millburn

stand — named after the club's late, great hero Jackie — something of a drama had been unfolding as chairman Sir John Hall turned on the "small minority of supporters" who had dared to criticise the manager Kevin Keegan's attacking style of play. Keegan was unrepentant after the Liverpool defeat. "We carry on playing this way — or I go," he said — a veiled threat perhaps but one that Sir John, who has ploughed £70 million of his personal fortune into stadium and players, took a little seriously.

"I'm appalled at the criticism," said Sir John. "These people should stay away if they don't want to back Kevin. They should remember that only four years ago this club was heading for the (old) Third Division."

By late afternoon, club captain Peter Beardsley had arrived at the stadium. As supporters crowded around for autographs, he was philosophical. "Disappointed, yes, but with seven games to go we will do it with support like this. All the lads feel the same way. The fans are tremendous."

For the club bosses, observing the queues outside the souvenir store, the future still looked decidedly bright. Five years ago the club merchandising business was turning over £200,000 annually, now it's edging towards £9 million. Overall, club turnover is up from £4 million to £40 million.

Above all Newcastle United and the sporting infrastructure it now supports, from rugby to ice hockey, is one big money-making machine. There is but one problem — the ultimate prize.

Chief executive Freddie Fletcher, who put Glasgow Rangers on an even keel financially, remained realistic about the hype. "We are not an institution," he conceded. "Manchester United and Liverpool are because you've got to win things to become an institution, and that's the challenge."

Freddie Shepherd, a director who owns 10 per cent of the club, remained upbeat: "Geordies are used to getting knocked but they always bounce back."

And they play struggling QPR at home tomorrow, and Blackburn away on Monday. just do it."

David Lacey, page 14; Hall hits out, page 16



The house in a quiet Chicago suburb (top left) where Theodore Kaczynski (above left) is believed to have spent his boyhood years, before gaining a scholarship to Harvard (right)



Misfit's lonely downfall

FBI agents believe they have finally caught up with a serial bomber

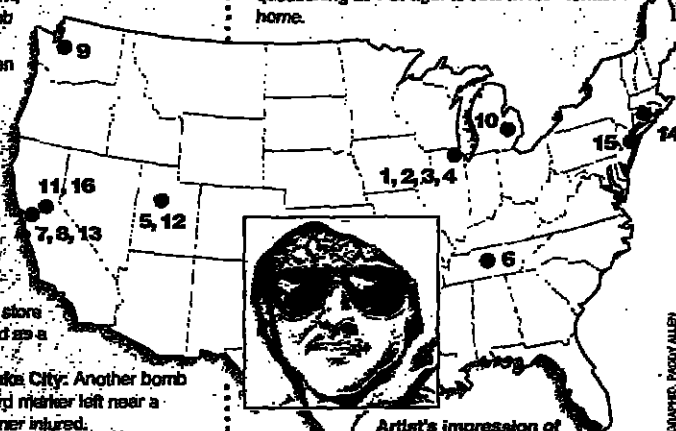
Ian Katz in New York

By yesterday morning the pieces were sliding into place like parts of a jigsaw. He was a brilliant mathematician who abandoned academia for a hermit-like existence. He lived in a tiny, hand-built cabin without electricity or running water. He spoke little and read voraciously. The description of Theodore Kaczynski could hardly have matched the profile drawn up by the FBI any better. Long before the former Berkeley professor aged 33 was charged in a Montana courtroom with possessing an unregistered firearm — specifically, components from which an explosive device could be assembled — agents who had hunted a technophobic serial bomber for almost two decades were convinced they had the Unabomber.

Perhaps only in Montana, a tolerant haven for eccentrics and extremists such as the so-called Freemen holed up in a ranch several miles to the east, could the intense,

The bomb targets across America

- 1 May 26, 1978 - Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois: Package bomb explodes injuring a university police officer.
- 2 May 9, 1979 - Northwestern University: device left on the university's student common exploded, slightly injuring a graduate.
- 3 Nov. 18, 1979 - Chicago: parcel bomb mailed in Chicago explodes in an airplane's cargo area. Twelve people suffered from smoke inhalation.
- 4 June 10, 1980 - Chicago suburbs: Parcel bomb injures airline executive.
- 5 Oct. 8, 1981 - University of Utah, Salt Lake City: Bomb found in hallway, defused by bomb squad.
- 6 May 5, 1982 - Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee: Package bomb explodes, injuring a secretary in the computer science department.
- 7 July 2, 1982 - University of California at Berkeley: Professor injured by bomb in coffee room.
- 8 May 15, 1985 - University of California at Berkeley: Graduate badly injured when a bomb exploded in a computer room.
- 9 June 18, 1985 - Auburn, Washington: Parcel bomb received in the mail at Boeing Co. Explodes when opened.
- 10 Nov. 15, 1985 - Ann Arbor, Michigan: Parcel bomb mailed to the home of a University of Michigan professor injures a research assistant.
- 11 Dec. 11, 1985 - Sacramento, California: The owner of a computer store killed by a bomb exploded as a "road house" meeting.
- 12 Feb. 26, 1987 - Salt Lake City: Another bomb exploded as a post-hazardous nuclear left near a computer store. Store owner injured.
- 13 June 22, 1983 - Tiburon, California: Renowned geneticist injured by parcel bomb.
- 14 June 24, 1983 - Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut: Computer science professor injured by parcel bomb.
- 15 Dec. 10, 1994 - N Caldwell, N.J.: New York City advertising executive killed by parcel bomb.
- 16 April 24, 1985 - Sacramento, California: President of the California Forestry Association killed by parcel bomb.
- 17 June 28, 1995 - San Francisco: San Francisco Chronicle newspaper received a letter threatening to bomb a flight out of Los Angeles International Airport.
- 18 June 1985 - Unabomber contacts the New York Times and the Washington Post saying offering to stop his campaign if they print his manifesto of ideas.
- 19 Sept. 19, 1995 - Washington, D.C.: The Washington Post and New York Times publish the 35,000-word manifesto.
- 20 April 3, 1996 - Theodore Kaczynski, former university maths professor, taken into custody for questioning as FBI agents search his Montana home.



heard recluse have failed to arouse suspicion. So disdainful of motorised transport was he, that he rode every where on an old bicycle fitted with home-made snow tires.

Mr Kaczynski's arrest as he resisted a search of his cabin by FBI agents on Wednesday appeared to have ended one of the most expensive and humiliating manhunt in American history.

Ever since a primitive bomb exploded at Northwestern University in May 1978 injuring a security guard, an army of agents had crisscrossed the country, always seemingly a step behind the bomber whose campaign cost the lives of three people and maimed 23 others.

In one of his many letters to newspapers, the bomber even took the trouble to taunt his pursuers: "It doesn't appear the FBI is going to catch us any time soon," he wrote. "The FBI is a joke."

In the end, it was not the thousands of hours spent combing library records, questioning academics, or

visiting scrap metal yards that led investigators to Mr Kaczynski's cabin outside the tiny town of Lincoln. The 18-year-old case was broken by a stroke of luck.

According to law enforcement sources, members of Mr Kaczynski's family became suspicious two months ago when clearing out their bungalow in Chicago. Among the suspect's effects, they found a collection of writings uncannily similar to the 35,000 word "manifesto" published by the Washington Post and New York Times in September.

Fearing the worst, Mr Kaczynski's brother contacted the FBI. A search of the family home turned up more clues, but even after weeks of painstaking surveillance, investigators said they did not have enough evidence to arrest the former academic. That changed when agents searched his cabin on Wednesday. According to the New York Times, they found explosive materials and bomb-making equipment.

As agents had long sus-

pected of the bomber, Mr Kaczynski had once lived in Chicago, northern California and Utah. The suspect was described as a broody loner who was all but self-sufficient. He spoke in enigmatically incomplete sentences.

The young Mr Kaczynski was remembered as distinctly unmemorable. He passed quickly through high school, winning a scholarship to study mathematics at Harvard University, before moving to the University of Michigan to study for a doctorate.

It was the mid-sixties, and the Michigan campus was a cradle of student radicalism. But Mr Kaczynski was remembered more for his academic achievements. The suspect's preferred intellectual terrain was the recondite area of so-called "complex analysis".

George Pinnolan, a mathematician professor who taught him, said: "He was a very able, very serious student and he solved a very difficult problem in his thesis."

After earning his doctorate, Mr Kaczynski took a job as an

acting assistant professor at the University of California at Berkeley, another hotbed of leftwing activism. After teaching mathematics for two years, he resigned for unknown reasons.

His path after leaving academia is less clear. According to reports yesterday, he took a succession of odd-jobs as he wandered round the country. For a period around 1980, agents believe he lived in a remote Afghanistan village.

WITH his bizarre Luddite credo and fiendish bomb-making skills, the Unabomber has surpassed the most notorious serial bomber in American history, the so-called Mad Bomber, George Metesky, whose pursuers grudgingly admitted their admiration for his intelligence and craftsmanship.

Investigators could have had little idea of the trail of terror that lay ahead when amateurish devices exploded at two Illinois universities in 1978 and 1979. Agents began to suspect that they might be dealing with a serial bomber in November 1979 when a device exploded in the hold of an American Airlines flight to Washington, without causing injury. Because his targets had been linked with universities and airlines, they dubbed the case "Unabom".

The bomber struck regularly in the early 1980's. In 1980, the United Airlines president, Percy Wood, was injured opening a package at his Chicago home. A Berkeley professor received one two years later. In 1985, two people were maimed at the University of Michigan. Later that year, the bomber killed for the first time. His victim was Hugh Scrutton, the owner of a computer store in Sacramento, California.

The bomber appeared to have broadened his range of targets, but investigators still saw a pattern: individuals linked with technology — in particular computers. They speculated Unabomber may have lost his job to a computer.

But the bombs themselves were a window on the Unabomber's personality, crafted from everyday items such as scrap wood and lamp wire. Metal parts appeared to have been polished, and some even numbered.

"He's doing these things not because he has to, but because he enjoys it or feels a compulsion to do it," a retired FBI bomb expert who helped hunt the Unabomber for 14 years said. "I picture someone bent over a bench late at night tinkering with the

things. He may even be talking to himself while he makes them."

Frequently investigators manage to track down bombers through the rare components used in their devices, but the Unabomber made everything himself. The agents hunting him with increasing desperation got their first breakthrough in 1987, when a man in a hooded sweatshirt and sunglasses was spotted leaving what later proved to be a bomb in a Salt Lake City car park. They now had a sketch of his suspect, but the bomber simply disappeared, stopping his attacks for six years.

By the time a San Francisco geneticist was injured by one of his devices in June 1993, agents conceded privately that their sketch was all but obsolete. The Unabomber resumed his campaign in December 1994, mailing a bomb that killed an advertising executive, Thomas Mosser, in New Jersey. Four months later, another device killed Gilbert Murray, head of a lobbying company which had worked for the timber trade.

The killing fuelled speculation about one aspect of the case. The Unabomber appeared to have a fascination for wood: almost all his devices had some wooden parts. In April 1995, the Unabomber wrote to the New York Times declaring that he was an anarchist. He announced that he was "getting tired of making bombs" and proposed a Faustian bargain: if the New York Times and Washington Post would publish his 35,000-word manifesto, he would stop.

The rambling diatribe eventually published by the Washington Post provided investigators with a treasure trove of clues. In his rant the bomber carved a small library of abstruse texts. Agents combed university library lists to find out who had borrowed titles such as Chinese Political Thought in the 20th Century.

Meanwhile, the manifesto earned the Unabomber an almost cult status in America's growing technophobic counter-culture. "He has become one of those emblems of 20th-century America," says Gar Smith, a radical environmentalist, in a forthcoming documentary to be broadcast on Channel 4.

The FBI showed copies of the manifesto to dozens of academics in an effort to identify the Unabomber — but the suspect's own family appears to have beaten them to it. In Lincoln yesterday, most people who knew him were still shaking their heads in disbelief.

Review

Size matters for slimline Loaf

Dave Simpson

Meat Loaf
Manchester Nymex

BEFORE the main course, a succession of black and white films pondered the "Doe and Don'ts of Dating" and asked "What does it take to be popular?" It's a question Meat Loaf must have agonised over time and time again. Bullied as a child over his bulk (200lbs aged 10), like Pulp's Jarvis Cocker he has serialised his revenge.

"They taunt me for being big," he must have decided. "So I'll become even bigger." And he did. Bat Out Of Hell, released in 1977, is the fourth biggest selling album of all time, shifting almost 30 million copies. The sequel and comeback album from 1983 has sold half that already.

The irony is that Meat Loaf's music is bigger, even, than his gargantuan sales. It's based around big titles, considerable bombast, wrenching power ballads and a drum sound the size of a small nuclear explosion. The question wasn't whether Meat would be big enough to fill the enormous Nymex but would the venue be big enough to hold him?

However, when Mr Loaf appeared, he was, sadly, a slimmed-down model of himself, dwarfed by the 40ft inflatable suspended-reid woman front stage. Meat's songs present an idealised, larger-than-life view of ladies, but this looked ridiculous. As each preposterous "oh" led into a honey-drenched "ah", a power ballad would collapse into a hushed yet still some-

how bombastic piano. Even the women seemed overcome by the size of it all. She promptly deflated.

At times, it was hard to remember these are the '90s. But if Meat is to his former self what a Ford Fiesta is to a Pontiac gas-guzzler, this was the only concession made to the times. From the band's absurd Eagles haircuts to their endless boogie jams, it was as if the '80s had never happened.

Meat Loaf's cowboy-booted rock songs are romantic fantasies brimming with sexual tension but no actual sex; bombast without the bomb; good, mildly risqué, old-fashioned stuff, where political correctness has no place.

The new songs sounded like the old songs. Their titles consisted of excruciating puns (An Original Sin), clichés ("pounding hearts"), and guitar solos that made you thankful the Sex Pistols are reforming. Sometimes it was hard not to be overwhelmed by the sheer scale of it: to wonder how many babies had been conceived to Paradise By The Dashboard Light or how many motorcyclists have revved off to an early grave listening to Bat Out Of Hell.

And sometimes, it was hard to imagine this enormous wall of sound was created by a human. But as the night wore on it was clear some of Meat's vocal power has diminished with age and slimming aids. During I'd Lie For You And That's The Truth, he sounded overwrought, dwarfed by the shrill tones of co-vocalist Patti Russo. Meat is big, but not, it would appear, big enough for his own show.

Smoking linked to cervical cancer but quitting reverses the damage

Chris Millill
Medical Correspondent

WOMEN who smoke are increasing their chances of cervical cancer, but those who quit can reverse the damage, researchers say today.

Scientists from the Imperial Cancer Research Fund have looked at the changes in abnormal cells in the cervix

among women who continue to smoke and those who stop. Those who gave up showed a significant drop in the size of the abnormalities, and in some cases the problem cleared up altogether.

There have been a number of studies suggesting smoking can increase the risk of cervical cancer, although exact proof of this has not been available.

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صكرا من الامل

Rivals dismiss £20 million investment to create 4,500 part-time assistant jobs

Trolley wars

How the battle moved from price to service

- 1992 Continental discounters Aldi and Netto entered UK.
- Aldi returned to low price emphasis and 'Aldi Price' slogan.
- 1993 Sainsbury opened serious price war with 'Price Check' campaign.
- Tesco launched 'Value Line' range to compete against discounters.
- Sainsbury launched 'Essential' for 'Essentials' campaign.
- 1994 Tesco introduced 'One in front' checkout queueing policy.
- 'Sainsbury 2000' marketing campaign launched.
- Tesco's New Deal Pricing cut prices on key branded products.
- 1995 Sainsbury introduced 'Everybody's Favourite Ingredients' promotion.
- Tesco launched Clubcard.
- Sainsbury's ABC card went national.
- Sainsbury announced 'customer first' service improvements.

Packers square up to greeters as Tesco raises the stakes in superstores service war

Roger Cowe on a 'customer care' drive

TESCO yesterday opened a new front in its supermarket wars with a £20 million investment in customer service which will finance 4,500 part-time 'customer assistant' jobs. Rivals quickly dismissed the 'packers' initiative, which heralds a switch in emphasis away from price. They claimed they were already offering the kinds of service which Tesco introduced yesterday, with Asda looking for 1,000 extra 'greeters' — jolly uncle types who welcome customers to the store, hand out promotional leaflets and are available to help shoppers. Asda employs 2,000 people in these jobs, and 3,000 other service assistants, but wants to make sure that all entrances to its 207 stores are served by 'greeters'.

Till talk

'We don't need no bit of posh round here'

Sarah Ryle

AT THE Elephant & Castle, Tesco's new customer assistants were fully deployed. But there was not a blue waistcoat in sight. Only loads of cynical south Londoners.

One bemused checkout worker was unaware the new salvo had been

launched. 'So that's what those people are doing. There are a few of them around with big badges with their names on but maybe they haven't got their uniforms yet. They're trying to be a bit posh, aren't they?' If there was one thing the people of SE1 could do without, according to local resident Danny Frost, a bit of posh was it. 'They have made it into one of those Metro shops with soup in clear plastic bags, but it isn't like the Covent Garden one with eight kinds of pesto. You couldn't do that here. You'd be killed.' So would the blue waistcoated troops drag the clients out of the nearby Ice Land and Sainsbury? Neville Jackson, aged 28, was unimpressed. 'They should

have dolly birds promoting the special offers, not people in blue waistcoats.' A nonchalant Samantha Wright, aged 23, said: 'I don't really need people hassling me but I suppose it's good for older people or women with small kids.' Sberyl James was preparing to tackle the holiday shop with her daughter, Rachel. 'I do like help with the packing. I don't mind not having one of those supermarkets nearby because I can get a paper and stuff from the chemist's in the shopping centre. It's a bit of a gimmick.' For Lady's Parker, in her late 70s, the critical issue was the cost of the campaign to customers. 'I'm glad some more people have got jobs but I hope the prices don't go up.'

which has been tested in nine stores since August, was part of a programme which began three years ago and costs £100 million a year. The first step was an internal 'First Class Service' training programme aimed at encouraging store staff to be more helpful. Service improvements began in 1994 with the 'One in front' promise to open more checkouts when queues begin to form. This was followed last year with the launch of the Clubcard loyalty scheme, which now has 5.5 million active members. The cost of service improvements will be met by savings elsewhere, Mr Leahy said. He denied the emphasis on service was intended to distract attention from prices. 'Price is still very important. Customers have become more demanding — they want better quality, better prices and better service.'

continued from page 1 died as a result of a birth defect which led to the collapse of his windpipe. But the pathologist, David Rushton, told the court he had found no evidence of such a condition, despite the claims of three doctors in the operating theatre that they had seen some form of collapse. Dr Whittington said: 'It would be naive to think that every death on the operating table is an accident or misadventure. We should not be pillorying surgeons for the actions they have taken in good faith as a result of their training and experience. We must remember the essentials. The essentials were they were trying to save the life of a very sick child.' He referred to the 'unfortunate mix-up' concerning Robert's transfer between hospitals and said: 'I am sure it is distressing for the parents to recall this and they may feel they were let down in this respect. But I don't believe there is any concrete evidence to say that in Robert's case it would have made a different outcome.'

'I believe Robert died as a consequence of his illness — natural causes.' The hospitals admitted there was a 'lack of clarity' in communication and said in a joint statement that new procedures had been implemented following internal investigations. 'The circumstance of Robert's death is a tragedy,' the statement said. 'All the hospitals are doing everything possible to ensure such an event cannot happen again. All the hospitals accept there are lessons to be learned.'

Journalists like to think of themselves as professionals — doctors, lawyers, that sort of thing. Wrong. They're tradesmen and sometimes the trade is rough. Peter Preston on Victor Zorza

Woolwich contracts scrutinised

Ian King

THE investigation into alleged expenses 'discrepancies' which led to the sacking of the Woolwich Building Society chief executive, Peter Robinson, has been widened to examine possible irregularities in multi-million pound business dealings between him and outside contractors. Directors are understood to be concentrating their attention on two contracts drawn up on behalf of the Woolwich with independent companies, the Guardian has established. Details came to light after an internal audit drew the board's attention to suggestions that Mr Robinson had submitted a series of irregular expenses claims. The investigation into the nature of his involvement in outside business contracts formed part of the board's decision to ask 54-year-old Mr Robinson to leave the company. This latest development in the inquiry follows earlier disclosures that the Woolwich had uncovered a series of alleged irregularities in expenses submitted by Mr Robinson. These include the apparent ordering of a Range Rover which was billed directly to the Woolwich without the knowledge of the society's audit department. Directors were also concerned at suggestions that Mr Robinson used Woolwich staff to act as gardeners at his £450,000 Kent home. Mr Robinson was last night unavailable for comment. He is understood to be pressing for £300,000 compensation,

which is equivalent to a year's salary. He is also demanding the guarantee of full pension rights for his 33 years of service. Mr Robinson publicly denied any irregular conduct over his expenses claims in a statement issued on Wednesday. He said: 'The first I heard from the board was on Monday afternoon. This was after 33 years of unblemished service with the Woolwich, of which I am very proud, and culminating in my appointment as chief executive only three months ago. I deny that I have in any way misused the society's facilities.' His firm of lawyers, DJ Freeman, yesterday called on the Woolwich to 'put up or shut up'. Irena Greaves, for the firm, said it was still waiting for the Woolwich to provide evidence of alleged wrongdoings, and accused the society of making contradictory statements to the press. She added: 'We've nothing to comment on because we haven't seen the allegations in full — the ball's in the Woolwich's court.' The Woolwich last night declined to comment on the progress of its inquiries. However the society is understood to have no plan to press charges on condition that Mr Robinson returns the disputed funds. A well-placed source close to the Woolwich last night said that Mr Robinson could have stood to get share options yielding him at least £2 million if he had remained with the society to oversee its flotation. The £3 billion issue has been pencilled in for August next year.

Selling point... 'It's not about putting on a plastic smile,' a Tesco spokesman claimed

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK MARTIN

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4 BRITAIN

Howard told money to build jails would be better spent on policing

Chief constable attacks minimum sentencing

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

ACHIEF constable yesterday broke ranks and became the first senior police officer to back the judges in their row with the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, over US-style sentencing.

During a visit to Grimsby by Mr Howard, Humberside chief constable Tony Leonard said that money to be spent building a new generation of private prisons would be better used for policing and crime prevention.

The attack came as the new director-general of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, warned Mr Howard that if the already predicted rises in the prison population are to be met he will need to double the prison building programme promised in the white paper, de-

tailoring tougher sentences, which was published earlier this week.

The chief constable was highly critical of the consequences of a policy that will mean three-year minimum sentences for third-time burglars and seven-year minimum jail terms for repeat drug dealers.

"It's going to cost an awful lot of money in terms of building new prisons. I'd rather see that money ploughed into policing and preventing crime," Mr Leonard said.

He acknowledged that the sentencing package addressed important issues but voiced concern about the erosion of the independence of judges. "I agree with the Lord Chief Justice in that I don't think Parliament should set minimum sentences. The law should set maximum sentences and should trust the ju-

diary to implement sensible arrangements as to the length of the sentence," he said.

But the Home Secretary defended the principles behind his package during his visit to Mr Leonard's force, arguing that money would be found both for the prison building programme and for extra police.

"A maximum sentence is not a sufficient deterrent. These views are not the views of the police generally and I am very pleased that my proposals are being supported by the people at the sharp end of the law," said Mr Howard.

However while the Home Secretary was promising money would be available for the 12 new prisons needed to house the 10,800 extra inmates a year when his minimum sentences come in, Mr Tilt was warning that it would not be enough.

"We need to build another 10 prisons to cope with the already expected rise in the prison population. We're looking at a programme that will include a total of 25 prisons over the next 10 to 12 years," Mr Tilt said during a visit to Gartree prison in Leicestershire.

"We shall have an argument about precisely how much money we need, but the white paper commits the Government to providing additional resources and I am confident that is a firm commitment."

The most recent projection of the prison population, published yesterday by the Home Office, expects daily jail numbers to rise by a further 8,900 within the next eight years, before taking the white paper proposals into account. Britain's jail population is already at a record 53,941.

Nearly 40pc of CAB advice on employment rights 'is wrong'

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

MUCH of the advice given by Citizens' Advice Bureaux on employment rights is incorrect and could expose them to negligence claims, an independent report has concluded.

The research, commissioned by the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux (NACAB), found that nearly 40 per cent of advice was "below a standard of competence that

would be required to meet NACAB standards and to protect against possible claims of negligence."

The report, from Tamara Lewis and Penny Waterhouse of the Central London Law Centre, classified only 20 per cent of advice as "good". Nearly half of "one-off" advice was "poor" or "very poor", though follow-up work was better.

The study, which has had a limited circulation, was completed 18 months ago but has just been leaked to Legal Action, the journal of the

campaigning Legal Action Group. It sampled 16 bureaux, chosen by the NACAB as representative, and looked in detail at 319 cases.

Bureaux tended to give poor advice on unfair dismissal in redundancy cases, failed to identify workplace discrimination, and failed to advise on maternity leave procedures and job security in sickness cases.

Roger Smith, director of the Legal Action Group, said: "The willingness of the CAB service to commission this report is much to its credit.

The Government must seriously consider the level of provision that can be expected from an organisation pushed beyond its limits to deliver adequate advice in complex areas of law without adequate resources."

Mr Smith said the report showed there were "grave dangers" in the Government's plans to shift some advice work from solicitors to general advice agencies. Sue Thomas, NACAB's head of information, said: "It is good to know that 60 per cent of advice is OK."



Travellers waiting for connections at Victoria coach station, London. PHOTOGRAPH DAVID SILLITOE

Fine time for a traffic jam

Viviek Chaudhary

MOTORISTS were warned yesterday of serious congestion on roads as thousands headed off for the traditional Easter break and forecasters predicted fine weather.

The AA said that while most roadworks have been suspended for the four-day break, work is continuing on the M25 between junctions six and eight and nine and 10; on the M6 between junction 20 and 21a in Cheshire and junction 28 and 29 in Lancashire; and on the A617 in Derbyshire.

A spokesman added: "The fine weather is set to cause serious congestion along country roads and motorways where roadworks are continuing. Most people have left early for their break but are set to return on Monday so there will be further congestion then. We are advising motorists to stagger their journeys and check their vehicles before setting off."

The Confederation of British Industry claimed yesterday that Easter traffic congestion has once again highlighted "the historic failure of UK transport policy".

Robert Napier, chairman of the CBI's transport policy committee, said that an extra £2 billion should be spent on transport infrastructure, including roads and public transport.

Gatwick airport said that it expected to handle around 380,000 passengers during the Easter break. Popular destinations are the United States, Caribbean and Spain.

The Meteorological Centre said that the weather was expected to remain sunny and there was only a slight chance of rain in remote parts of Scotland.

A record Easter in the Lake District is also expected. Stan Robinson of the Bowness Bay tourist information centre at Windermere said: "The telephones are extremely busy with inquiries for Easter. All our bed and breakfast and hotel people say they are fully booked. And people from all over the country are determined to come here because the weather is gorgeous."

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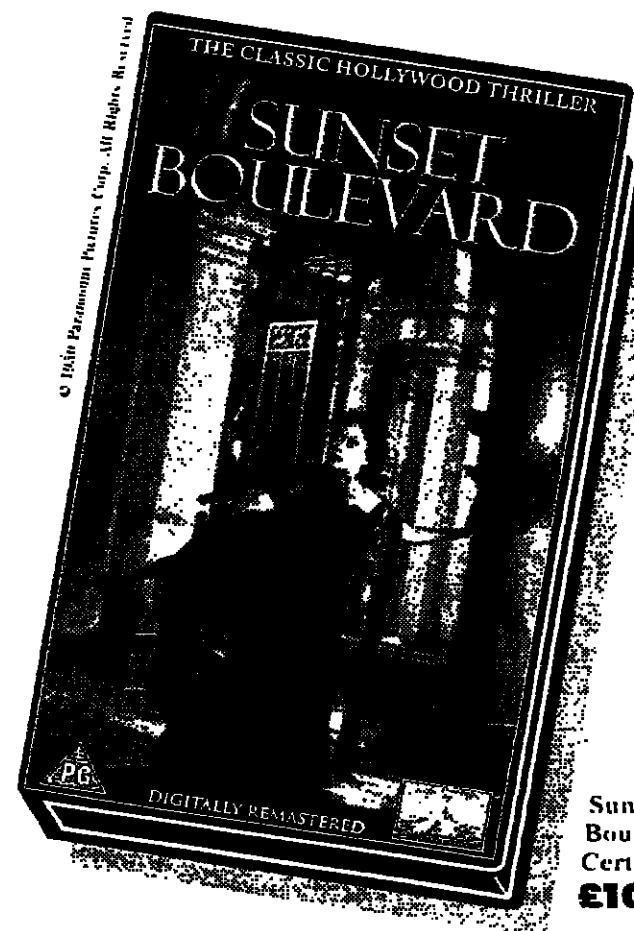
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It's a classic. (Here's the proof in black and white.)

Remastered especially for its video release. Complete with the original theatrical trailer and an in-pack postcard of the original poster, this Billy Wilder classic starring William Holden and Gloria Swanson really is ready for its close up.

There's more to entertain you at WHSmith

صكتا من الالاحل

BSE crisis: Minister hints at action in European court • Harman alleges deregulation flew in face of official study



Cardboard stand-in... Artists Paul Meedham (left) and Chris Gilmore display a prototype sculpture of cardboard and sticky tape which they plan to reproduce and offer to farmers for £250 each to fill the gap in the landscape when millions of cows are slaughtered to eradicate BSE. They will make cardboard calves too, but not cowpats

'More cases likely among young people'

Chris Mihill looks at the data in full

THE scientists whose research sparked the BSE panic are today publishing their data in full, with a warning that further cases of CJD among young people are likely.

It was the findings of the National Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Surveillance which led the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee to insist that government action was needed because of a probable new strain of CJD linked to BSE.

Although the main findings made public — 10 new cases in young people of a type of CJD not seen before — the report gives further details of the clinical symptoms and histories of the illness, making it plain how unusual these cases are compared with previous reports of CJD.

The doctors state: "If there is a causal link then, given the potentially long and widespread exposure to the BSE agent, further cases of this new variant of CJD are likely to arise."

They conclude: "Our observation of a previously unrecognised variant of CJD occurring to date only in persons under the age of 45 is a cause for great concern. That this is due to exposure to the BSE agent is perhaps the most plausible interpretation of our findings. However, we emphasise that we do not have direct evidence of such a link, and other explanations are possible."

Robert Will, head of the Edinburgh-based unit, and UK and overseas colleagues say in the *Lancet* that 10 out of 207 cases of CJD examined neuropathologically since May 1990 have patterns of brain damage which clearly distinguish them.

The 10 cases, four men and six women, came to light between February 1994 and October 1995. The eight patients who have died were aged 18 to 41, with an average age of 29. The other two patients, who are seriously ill, are 18 and 31.

The time between symptoms appearing and death ranged from 7.5 to 22.5 months, with an average of 12, the doctors say. "Among 185 cases of sporadic CJD identified since May 1990, the average age of onset was 68 years and median duration of disease was four months."

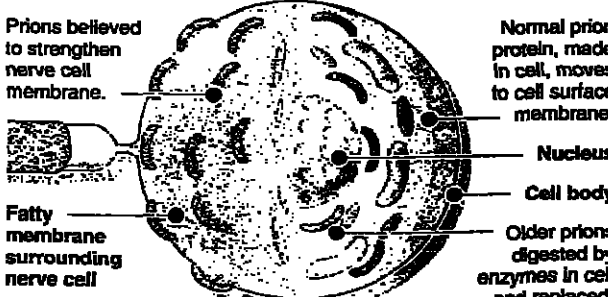
Nine cases of sporadic CJD

CJD Rogue protein

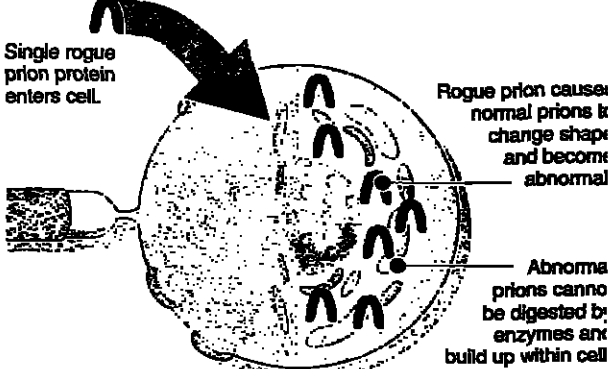
Normal prior protein: Coathanger-shaped molecule containing about 230 amino acids.

Rogue prior protein: Abnormal protein has identical amino acid sequences, but rogue prior adopts a different molecular shape.

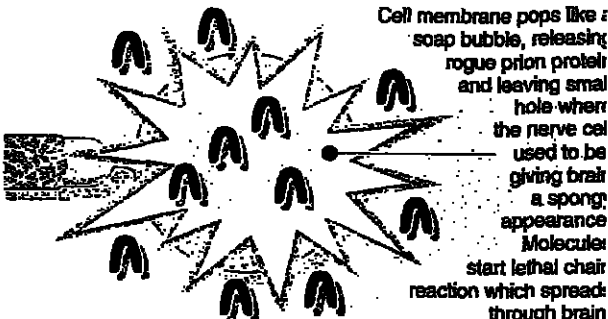
① Healthy nerve cell



② Infected nerve cell



③ Nerve cell death



Sources: New Scientist, Institute of Animal Health, SmithKline Beecham, U.S. National Institute of Health

in people under 34 have been identified since 1990, compared with four between 1970 and 1989.

In nine of the 10 unusual cases the patients had shown early behavioural changes and had been referred to a psychiatrist. None of the cases had the usual EEG (brainwave) patterns associated with CJD, and the doctors say that using conventional diagnostic methods none would have been classified as having CJD.

The doctors say post mortems, and brain biopsies in the two living patients, found that the 10 had strikingly different patterns of damage compared with previous cases, with clumps of the prions thought responsible for the illness distributed throughout the brain, and in greater numbers.

One patient had worked as a butcher for three years between 1985 and 1987, and one spent a week's holiday a year on a dairy farm between 1976 and 1986, although there was

no record of BSE in the herd. Nine patients had eaten beef or beef products in the past 10 years, but none had eaten brain. One had been a strict vegetarian since 1981.

The doctors do not think increased awareness of the illness — meaning that more doctors are looking for it — can explain its upsurge in young patients, and they have to consider the possibility of BSE transmission to humans.

"Exposure of the human population to BSE is likely to have been greatest in the 1980s, and especially towards the end of that decade, before the ban on the use of specified bovine offal was introduced. This would be consistent with an incubation period of between five and 10 years."

Other scientists have questioned the distinctness of the 10 cases. A report in last week's *New Scientist* of studies by a researcher in Essex said cases of CJD in young people had been missed because doctors had not been looking for them.

Hogg stands by cattle cull plan

'They'll have to shoot us first' say angry farmers

Michael White and Owen Bowcott

THE Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, yesterday accused his critics at home and in Europe of misunderstanding the extent of the long-term problems involved in eradicating BSE and his measures to bring that about.

As Mr Hogg stood by his package of culling measures — and hinted at legal action in the European Court to uphold it if necessary — his German counterpart, Jochen Borchert, said on local radio that "no one seriously expects the ban to be lifted in six weeks' time" when veterinarians review the situation.

Mr Hogg said he was not going to put a timetable on getting the ban lifted. "My business is not to arouse expectations which I cannot fulfil," he added as some farmers were reported as being willing to stand in front of their herds and be shot first rather than sanction a point-



Douglas Hogg: alleges 'misunderstanding'

less sacrifice of their life's work and their livelihoods. For his part, Mr Hogg appealed to farmers to act "logically", though he has been made well aware how emotional Tory MPs, especially those with farming interests, feel about what they regard as a cynical European Union ploy to weaken British agriculture.

Conservative MPs insist — without furnishing tangible evidence — that Europe's herds are as badly infected, if not more so, than Britain's. Mr Hogg believes British farmers have also failed to

grasp how much the Government has done to restore market confidence.

He told Radio 4's *World at One* that the EU had "unbased expectations" as to what could be done. There was constant talk, for example, of eradicating BSE in a short time as a condition of lifting the ban. "Now that is simply not possible," he said.

Anthony Gibson, regional director of the National Farmers Union in the South-west, said the destruction of whole herds would be resisted. "If the Ministry of Agriculture were to try to do that, they would find their way literally barred. We've had farmers ringing us and saying 'if they try to shoot me first', they'll have to shoot me first," Mr Gibson told BBC Radio 4's *Farming Today*.

Last night a leading neuropathologist, Dr Helen Grant, alleged that a potential loophole existed in the Government's precautions. The brains of calves under the age of six months are still being sold for human consumption, chiefly in Arab restaurants, the agriculture ministry has confirmed. On the assumption that BSE is passed from mothers to calves — a possibility being investigated by ministry researchers — infected offal may still be reaching the dinner table.

Meat hygiene undermined by Government, says Labour

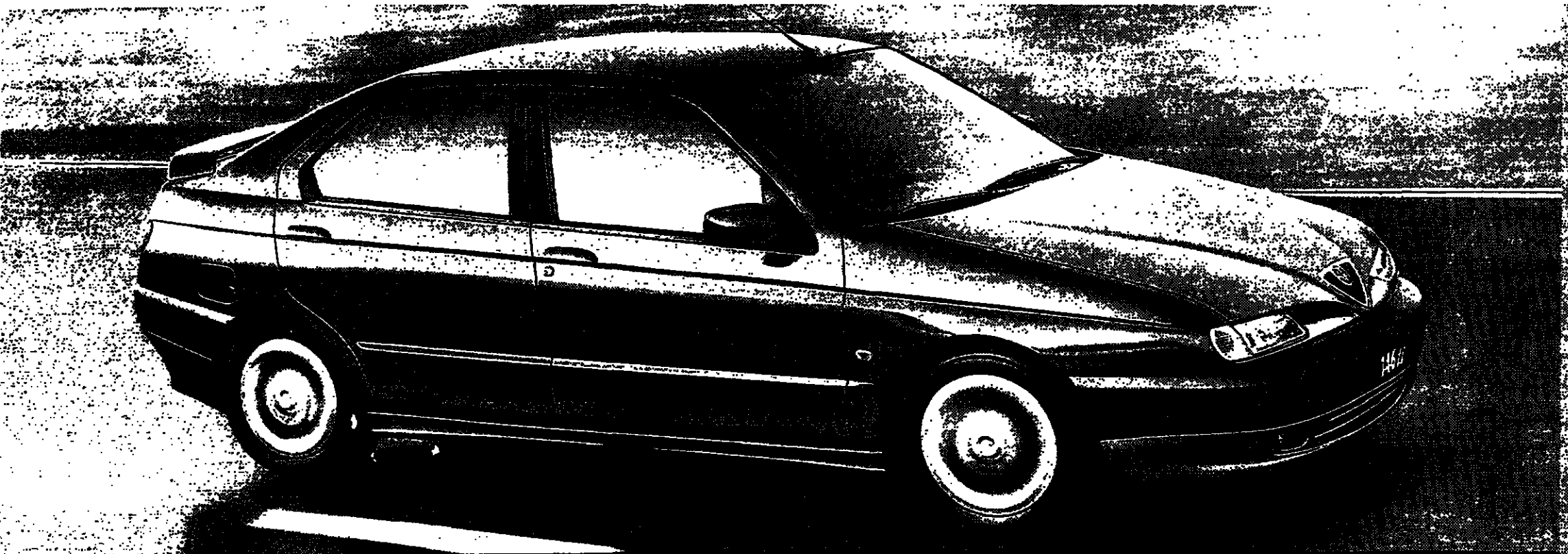
Patrick Wintour

LABOUR yesterday renewed its attack on hygiene standards in the meat industry, claiming the Government had received, and ignored, repeated warnings about Britain's slaughterhouses.

The shadow health secretary, Harriet Harman, and her deputy, Henry McLeish, alleged that in 1993 the Government went ahead with deregulation of slaughterhouses despite an independent report for the Ministry of Agriculture in 1993 boasting that 10 out of 207 cases of CJD examined neuropathologically since May 1990 have patterns of brain damage which clearly distinguish them.

Ministers have repeatedly said that failure to meet government and EU standards has nothing to do with deregulation. Labour claimed that the latest figures show 112 slaughterhouses out of 424 fail to comply with EU standards.

Mr McLeish and Ms Harman called on the Government to publish the latest figures for hygiene assessment in slaughterhouses, recent figures for those that have satisfied the EU directives, and names of those failing to meet official hygiene standards.



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Lack of black box hinders crash inquiry as bodies are recovered

US counts cost of fatal Bosnian trade mission

Julian Berger in Zagreb and Mark Tran in New York

IN HIGH winds and driving rain, the bodies of the United States commerce secretary, Ron Brown, and at least 32 of his entourage were brought off a rugged, mine-strewn Croatian hillside yesterday as investigators tried to discover exactly why their aircraft crashed moments before landing in Dubrovnik on Wednesday.

A temporary morgue was set up in Dubrovnik airport where Croatian and US pathologists were expected to identify the remains. President Bill Clinton telephoned Mr Brown's widow yesterday morning to inform her his body had been identified.

President Clinton ordered flags to be flown at half mast in Washington, and the New York Stock Exchange observed a moment of silence.

The victims included 13 American businessmen, 12 US government officials, an American journalist, and two Croatians — a photographer and an interpreter. There was uncertainty whether 33 or 35 passengers and crew had been on the aircraft when it crashed.

It was still unclear yesterday why the T-43 — the military version of the Boeing 737

Clinton delays historic veto bill

PRESIDENT Clinton yesterday delayed plans to sign a historic line-item veto bill until next week, because of the death of Ron Brown.

The bill allows a president to block parts of

spending bills or to strike down narrowly-targeted tax breaks. At present, the president may veto an entire bill but not its components. — Reuters.

at the airport there at Dubrovnik with no difficulty. If we thought it wasn't a safe approach we wouldn't allow our aircraft to use it," said Lieutenant-General Howell Estes, from the Pentagon.

It is possible the pilot tried to abort his landing at the last moment. Instead of turning west towards the runway, he appeared to have veered east into a 2,300 foot hillside. A US joint military and civil team

was dispatched to Dubrovnik yesterday to investigate, and the high-profile Balkans trip led by Mr Brown was part of the multinational effort involving the World Bank and the private sector to attract business and investment to Bosnia and Croatia.

Mr Brown said his job was to help US companies capture a share of the \$5.1 billion (£3.4 billion) in estimated aid that international financial institutions and governments are putting together to help the region.

Many aircraft have landed

The deaths of the senior executives on the plane have cut a swath through a range of American companies, not just in construction, but also technology and banking. Many were the chairmen and chief executive officers.

A number of the executives were infrastructure experts. Leonard Pieroni was chairman and CEO of Parsons, based in Pasadena, California, the USA's fourth largest construction company.

Another well-known engineering company that lost its top man was Foster Wheeler Energy from New Jersey: its chairman Robert Whitaker went down. Chairman John Scoville of the Chicago-based Harza Engineering was travelling with Mr Brown to discuss rebuilding dams and other water resources.

The telephone giant AT&T was represented by the senior vice-president Walter Murphy, the company's top expert on global operations and telecommunications.

Chairman Claudio Elia of Air & Water Technologies was an expert in environmental cleanup and anti-pollution work. A top banker was on the plane, Paul Cushman, chairman of the Washington-based Riggs International Banking.

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Quake theme park to offer Chinese good vibrations

AP in Beijing and Foreign Staff

CHINA is planning to build a theme park that will let visitors experience the "adventure" of an earthquake on the site of this century's worst seismic catastrophe, Xinhua news agency said yesterday.

"Modern technology will be used to enable visitors to live through the adventure of shaking buildings and moving land," it said, adding that the northern city of Tangshan, where an earthquake killed 240,000 people 20 years ago, has been proposed as the site of the theme park.

The quake, measuring 7.8 degrees on the Richter scale, happened on July 28 1976. The park planners are either confident that lightning will not strike twice in the same place, or believe the possibility of a repeat will add to the thrill.

Ruins from the earthquake have become a big tourist attraction, drawing 2 million visitors from China and abroad, Xinhua said. The ruins are on a government protection list.

The rest of Tangshan has been rebuilt using earthquake-resistant architecture. The maximum height allowed is six storeys and buildings must be 75ft apart.

Scientists admit that in 1976 some early warning signs of the earthquake were overlooked, although the Gang of Four is no longer blamed for the failure to act. A group of seismologists met 10 hours before the earthquake hit but was unable to reach a conclusion.

A teacher who was an amateur seismologist observed unusual behaviour among animals, but thought he might be laughed at by the authorities. He died in the quake the next morning. Technicians at the Mining Institute noticed a sharp rise in the water table but concluded it was the result of heavy rainfall.

More than 148,000 people were killed in Tangshan city, out of a population of about 1 million. Strict family planning rules were waived in the aftermath of the disaster and the population loss was quickly made up.

Cuban class of '96 leaves Marx firmly on the shelf

Revolutionary socialism is off the syllabus for students who know it as 'science fiction', writes Ray Sanchez in Havana

THE University of Havana, once a hotbed of socialist thinking, will not have any graduates specialising in Marxist philosophy this year.

Students in its domed halls are no longer obliged to memorise dog-eared Soviet-published manuals of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Seminars on "Scientific Communism" — sarcastically remembered by professors and students as "Science Fiction" — died with the Soviet bloc.

The long course lists on the rows of balletic boards in the school of history and philosophy today reflect a marked distancing of the Cuban people from the Marxist doctrine that was once delivered with cult-like fanaticism.

"For many today Marxism means nothing," the director of the philosophy department, Jorge Luis Acanda, said. "And the fault is all ours."

Only five students signed up for a course on the history of the Cuban revolution, according to course lists for the spring term. Nearly two dozen names were listed under the heading of contemporary United States history. The names of 75 students were registered for property law. Courses in accounting and finance, economics and statistics were also on offer.

But this will be the first year without a degree course option in Marxist philosophy since President Fidel Castro's government reopened the department in 1967. Only 29 students are taking philosophy, compared with more than 350 taking economics.

As Dr Castro grudgingly introduces reforms intended to move his nearly 11 million people towards a market economy, hard times have brought political uncertainty. That anxiety is most evident in the philosophy department, which once ensured that



Marx (above) has dwindling followers as Castro (below) makes capitalist reforms



everyone from farm worker to heart surgeon received measured doses of socialist ideology. "In the 1980s I taught Marxism to a class that included the national opera's orchestra director, a cinema manager and an office worker with a ninth-grade education," Mr Acanda said. "That contributed to

the vulgarisation of Marxism. There was a depreciation at the social level."

Mr Acanda, aged 41, recalled seminars in scientific communism with as many as 200 students. "Marxism was not only a product of consumption, because it had to be consumed, but also an ideological product desired by many, because of the enthusiasm of the revolution."

But in a country where more than half the population was born after Dr Castro took power in 1959, a crisis of ideology has paved the way for what Mr Acanda called a "crisis of reason".

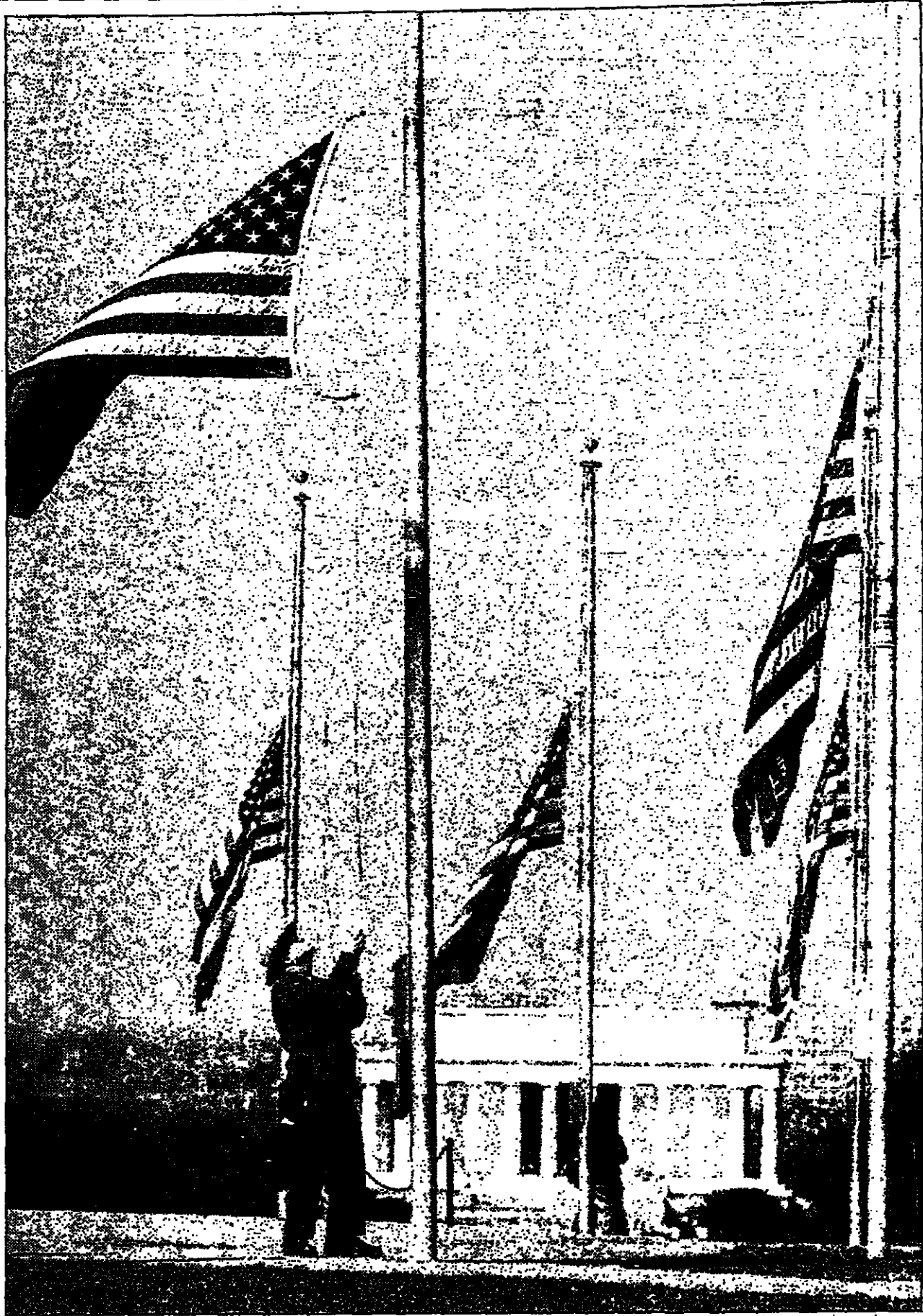
"You can see it in the book markets," he said. "The books of Marx and Lenin are worthless. No one buys them. The books with the most value today are those dealing with the irrational, the occult, religious cults, fortune telling and Nostradamus. In the irrational, people search for what Marxism can no longer give them."

Enrique Patterson, a former philosophy professor living in exile in Miami, said: "Those books are there because people no longer feel the need to compromise themselves with government ideology. Fidel Castro's only interest in Marxism lies in the part that says a single party must control all of society."

Mr Patterson, a University of Havana professor for six years, settled in south Florida's exile community after what he called 10 years of "internal exile" in Cuba for making remarks critical of Dr Castro.

In Miami he teaches Spanish at secondary level for more money than he earned at the university — but his heart is in his academic training.

"You cannot teach philosophy in Cuba because thinking clashes with the interests of the state," he said. Asked if his department would survive this new era in Cuban history, Mr Acanda smiled. "I believe so. If not, I would have been the first to go to work on my own — selling French fries or something." — Newsday.



Half-mast... A ranger lowers a flag at the Washington Monument yesterday in honour of Ron Brown. PHOTOGRAPH DOUG MALLS

Networks scorn 'party political'

Mark Tran in New York

AMERICA'S three biggest television networks were resisting pressure from a high-profile group of former network anchors and prominent politicians yesterday to transmit British-style party political broadcasts during peak viewing hours in the run up to November's US elections.

This coalition of the great and the good has signed an open letter to ABC, CBS and NBC, which is to run as a full-page ad in the New York Times. Its aim is to eliminate the need for venomous television advertising by political rivals.

The signatories include the

former television presenters Walter Cronkite and Roger Mudd, the Republican senator Alan Simpson and the Democratic senator Paul Simon. They are asking the networks to offer the leading candidates two-to-five minutes of airtime each night during the last month of the campaign.

So far though, only Rupert Murdoch, owner of Fox TV, is receptive to the idea. This week he reiterated his challenge to the networks to follow Fox's lead. The other networks have poured cold water on the idea.

"This is something we've looked at seriously in the past," an ABC official said. "We tend to believe that it's not going to solve the problem of negative campaigning. We

have many venues for candidates to reach the public and 42 hours of news and many occasions for politicians to appear in a relaxed setting, from Good Morning America to This Week with David Brinkley."

The networks reject the argument that their unwillingness to give politicians airtime boils down to money — they will be giving up advertising time. They point out that they already spend millions of dollars on covering presidential politics. The Fox network, on the other hand, does not even have an evening news programme and its willingness to give free time to politicians is a low-cost gesture.

In the planned Times advertisement the group calls for straightforward "talking head" presentations, a format that even Britain has ditched in favour of "infomercials".

"No tricky images. No unseen narrators. No journalists. Just the candidates making their best case to the biggest audience America assembles every night. No other relatively small change offers so much promise of raising the level of campaign discourse," the open letter proclaims.

Such a format in fact already exists on the C-Span cable channel, which offers unadorned, uncensored campaign coverage. But the networks fear that talking heads will only make viewers zap to another channel.

Australia embarrassed as ex-minister calls Asian neighbours racist

AP in Jakarta

THE Australian government tried to distance itself yesterday from the remarks made by one of its former foreign ministers that racism was rife in some Asian states.

In an interview with a Sydney radio station, Bill Hayden, who is also a former governor-general of Australia, said that Australia was a tolerant state compared to several of its neighbours. He

described the Chinese as racial supremacists and the Japanese as racial exclusivists. Malaysia and Indonesia discriminated against the ethnic Chinese.

"Indonesians don't trust the Chinese," said Mr Hayden, who was foreign minister in 1983-87. The Malaysian prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, ran a policy "which means, very simply, racial discrimination against the Chinese in that country in education and employment opportunity... The Indians

[in Malaysia] are largely dirt poor."

Referring to some of Australia's most important and sensitive trading partners, Mr Hayden said: "If you want to see racism, racial intolerance, look at some of our neighbours, neighbouring Asian countries."

In Malaysia several politicians lambasted Mr Hayden yesterday. One called him unscrupulous and another said the comments carried colonial overtones. Indonesia said he was

"irresponsible".

"We don't know what his motive is for making such baseless comments," the foreign ministry said.

Mr Hayden's comments coincided with an announcement by the Australian foreign minister, Alexander Downer, of a visit to Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand later this month.

With the trip in prospect, the Australian government has been scrambling to distance itself from Mr Hayden's remarks.



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World news in brief

Yeltsin's campaign starts with hand-outs

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin officially began his re-election campaign yesterday with promises of new cash handouts on a visit to Belgorod, a city 370 miles south of Moscow where his Communist rivals are strong.

Mr Yeltsin smiled and looked relaxed as he mingled with crowds after being registered as a candidate for the June 16 poll. The president, aged 66, showed no sign of the health problems he suffered after two heart attacks last year as he shook hands with passers-by and talked to people. But the carefully staged, high security trip seemed more like a royal visit than a meet-the-people vote-winning tour.

He promised to compensate investors whose savings have lost their value through the high inflation that has accompanied market reforms and pledged better grants for students and higher pensions for war veterans.

The president made no mention of an incident on Wednesday in which a sniper fired three shots near his Moscow home. Itar-Tass news agency said a building nearby had been the target, not Mr Yeltsin's home. Nobody was hurt.

Mr Yeltsin gave no other details of a planned decree outlining the compensation, which could affect millions, but said he would sign it in about a week.

His new promises were striking because he made them in a region where the Communists won 35 per cent of the votes in parliamentary elections in December and the pro-government bloc of the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, won only 6 per cent. — *Reuters, Belgorod.*

Belarus threatens diplomats

THE president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, enraged by mass rallies against his pro-Russian policies, threatened yesterday to expel diplomats attending them and deny accreditations to journalists covering them.

He said he had started "active talks" with the Russian television channels whose journalists had broadcast reports from a rally on Tuesday denouncing his signing a pact of integration with Russia. "These journalists will not be working here for many more days," he said.

"We have issued protests to a number of diplomats and asked them to leave our country. We will act here in unbending fashion as a sovereign and independent state. A diplomat must not march at the head of a demonstration."

About 20,000 people gathered in the capital Minsk on Tuesday to attack the pact signed earlier in the day in the Kremlin by Mr Lukashenko and President Boris Yeltsin.

Mr Lukashenko maintains tight control over the television and radio and has sacked several newspaper editors and suspended trade unions. — *Reuters, Minsk.*

Chinese drug addiction soars

DRUG addiction in China is soaring, new figures showing that the number of registered addicts leapt by at least 37 per cent in 1995. By the end of last year, 520,000 addicts were registered, the China Daily quoted drug commission officials as saying.

Chinese drugs experts estimate that the total number of addicts could be as high as one million, most of them now preferring heroin to opium, once China's traditional drug.

Bei Jingfu, vice-minister of public security, said he would take tougher action against drug abuse and trafficking this year. — *Reuters, Beijing.*

Net answer to malaria

HALF a million African children who die of malaria every year could be saved by the use of mosquito nets treated with insecticide, according to a United Nations study released yesterday.

Trials of nets treated with biodegradable insecticide reduced malaria deaths in children under five by one-third in Kenya and one-sixth in Ghana and the number of people who needed hospital treatment for malaria also fell.

The cost — between £3 and £5 for a net and 60p or less a year for insecticide — would be similar to that of the global immunisation efforts against tuberculosis, measles and polio. — *Reuters, New York.*

SS captain sent for trial

A MILITARY court yesterday ordered the former SS captain Erich Priebke (right) to stand trial for war crimes for his involvement in the 1944 Nazi massacre of 335 Italian men and boys in the Ardeatine Caves outside Rome.

It agreed that he should be tried on charges of multiple homicide. The trial will open on May 8.

Mr Priebke, aged 82, was extradited in November from Argentina, where he had lived openly since 1948.

He admits a role in the massacre, but says he was following orders. — *Reuters, Rome.*

Chernobyl cover-up fall-out

THE head of the radiation security department at the Chernobyl nuclear plant was dismissed yesterday because of an accident on November 17, which was covered up at the time. His dismissal came a day after the G7 industrialised countries increased to £2 billion an aid offer for closing the plant.

Ukraine's nuclear safety agency reported the accident on November 27, classifying it as a minor, level one, accident. In February, it was re-evaluated at level three. — *AP, Kiev.*

Arafat sacks police chief

PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat yesterday dismissed the Nabulus police commander, Colonel Ala Hosni, who ordered a raid on a West Bank university. Mr Arafat said he would set up special guard units for Palestinian universities.

The measures were aimed at ending protests set off by Mr Arafat's crackdown on Islamic militants after suicide bombings in Israel. — *AP, Nabulus.*



Jam today... Coaches entering Florence are to be cut by 70 per cent in number — still leaving 150 a day in a city with a population smaller than Edinburgh's. PHOTOGRAPH: DON MCPHEE

Florence tells culture vultures to book ahead

With 500-yard queues for its top galleries, the city is laying drastic plans to control the tourist tide, writes John Hooper

VISITORS to Florence this summer will have to book in advance to see its art treasures, if the city council gets its way.

The plan — to be put forward for national government approval within a couple of weeks — forms part of a drastic programme being implemented by Florence's centre-left council to relieve pressure on one of the world's most congested tourist destinations.

Earlier this week councilors ordered a 70 per cent cut in the number of coaches entering the city's historic centre.

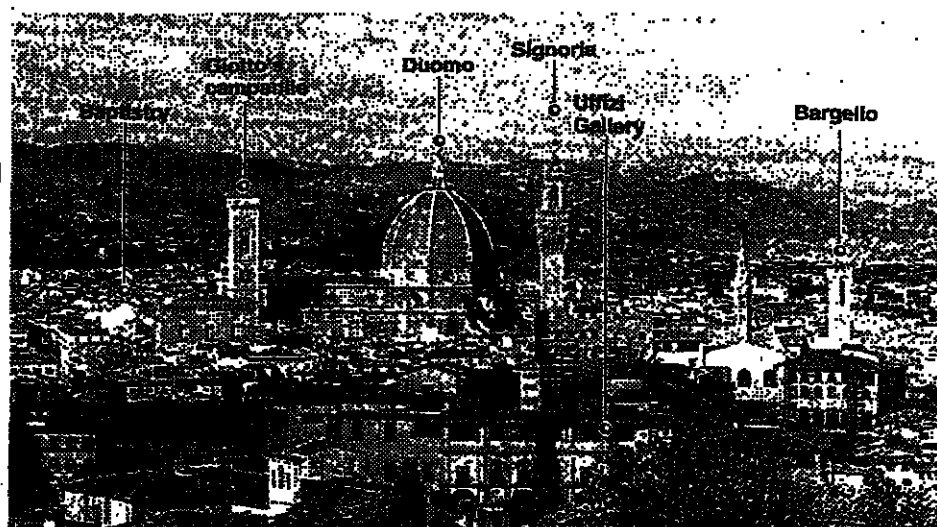
Guido Clemente, the councillor responsible for heritage, said yesterday that central government permission was needed for the reservations-only scheme because several galleries and museums — notably the Uffizi — were

owned and run by the state. But the go-ahead could be given through "quite a simple measure", which he expected to be approved before the general election on April 21.

"I hope that in a couple of weeks I shall be in a position to make an official announcement," he said. The scheme could be in place by the time of the European Union summit in Florence on June 21-22.

Mr Clemente said he had been prompted to act by 500-yard queues snaking across the Piazza della Signoria from the Uffizi gallery. "By the time you get in there, you don't want to see anything anymore," he said.

The Uffizi houses a collection built up by the Medici rulers between the 16th and 18th centuries. It includes Botticelli's Spring and Birth of Venus, Leonardo da Vinci's Annunciation and



unfinished Adoration of the Magi, and works by Cimabue, Giotto and others.

A car bomb in the city centre three years ago, which killed five people and injured 50, hit the Uffizi particularly hard, destroying three important 16th-century paintings and damaging countless others. Although no one was ever

charged with the crime, it was widely believed to be the work of elements in the Italian state unhappy with the progress made by the "clean hands" anti-corruption campaign.

Details of the proposed tourist arrangements have yet to be settled. "For groups at least, we should be able to have a booking

for a particular day at a particular time," Mr Clemente said.

Individuals' tickets would grant them right of entry at any time. But they would buy them on entering the city, not at the door. "Someone driving down to Florence should be able to make their reservation at the toll station as they pull

off the motorway," Mr Clemente added.

The scheme also envisages multi-entry passes, giving tourists access to several galleries and museums. "It won't eliminate the problems, but it should improve matters," Mr Clemente said.

His plan highlights the problems faced by cities like Florence from a never-ending rise in "cultural tourists". The prosperity spread by the "tiger" economies of south-east Asia is one factor pushing up numbers, now that worldwide recession has faded.

On an average day in the high season, Florence — with a population smaller than Edinburgh's — receives 50,000 visitors. Some 500 coaches jam into the city, most of them illegally parked.

The council this week imposed a limit of 150 per day on coaches entering the city centre. Those allowed in will have to park in the central car park, and pay 100,000 lira (£43.50) for each entry.

Leader comment, page 8

Chirac makes 'risky' Beirut visit

Paul Webster in Paris

SHARPSHOOTERS guarded Beirut airport and a band played the French and Lebanese national anthems as President Jacques Chirac defied political and physical risks yesterday by visiting Lebanon. He was the first Western head of state to do so since the end of the 1975-90 civil war.

Mr Chirac was launching a Middle East diplomatic initiative watched nervously by other European countries, which fear a backlash. "France will not cease to work for a just and global peace in the region. A peace which restores your country in all its sovereignty, over all its territory," Mr Chirac told the Lebanese parliament.

Mr Chirac has associated the European Union with Paris's intention to accelerate peace moves in the region and end the double occupation of Lebanon by Syria and Israel.

But with Britain and Germany reluctant to interfere in Lebanon to avoid offending Damascus — which has effectively annexed the country — diplomats speculated that Mr Chirac's approach might be quixotic and untimely.

Addressing parliament, the French president expressed confidence in Lebanon's future as a financial and commercial centre and said Paris intended to play a more ambitious role in the Arab world to construct a European-led Mediterranean partnership.

More than a billion francs — £125 million — in aid from government and private sources was offered to rebuild Beirut, still suffering the aftermath of a 15-year Christian-Muslim civil war.

Mr Chirac's determination to break the deadlock that followed the end of fighting was largely inspired by the often emotional links between the Gaullist movement and the Lebanese Christian right. But he was the first French presi-

dent to make an official visit since independence from the French mandate in 1943.

The French head of state was welcomed by President Elias Hrawi and the prime minister, Rafik Hariri, a close friend of Mr Chirac. Five thousand troops were mobilised to protect the road from the airport. The highway runs alongside slums which provide refuge for the violent Muslim Hizbullah movement, responsible for kidnapping 16 French citizens in the 1980s.

Hours earlier, soldiers had removed life-size portraits of Iran's late revolutionary patriarch, Ayatollah Khomeini, which towered over the airport highway.

An anti-French threat was issued by the pro-Iran Hizbullah, which launched a bombing wave in France in 1986.

But the greatest immediate concern was that a diplomatic faux pas could offend Syria or Israel. Syria has 35,000 troops in Lebanon and the Israelis have 1,000 men in the south.

Before addressing parliament, Mr Chirac listened as the Speaker, Nabih Berri, a Shi'ite Muslim, compared the Hizbullah-led guerrilla war against Israeli occupation to the French resistance in the second world war.

"There is a difference between resistance and terrorism," Mr Berri said. "The Lebanese resistance was the result of Israeli occupation."

French diplomats said Mr Chirac's visit could pave the way for an eventual reconciliation between Syria and Israel under the terms of a regional peace settlement.

Until now, Europe has followed the American lead by accepting Syria's policy as a reward for its participation in the allied side in the Gulf War against Iraq.

During his 48-hour stay, Mr Chirac will visit south Lebanon to meet French United Nations peacekeepers before flying to Egypt to discuss France's Middle East plans with President Mubarak.

Global arms talks torpedoed by Russian refusal to reveal sales

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

GLOBAL talks to control the arms trade broke down yesterday after Russia refused to disclose sales information and accused Western countries of trying to corner the market.

Senior officials from 31 countries had spent two days of acrimonious discussion in Vienna trying to hammer out an agreement on regulating exports of weapons and dual-use technology.

But diplomats said the Russian and US negotiators were unable to agree on crucial elements of what is known as the Wassenaar Arrangement on arms sales — a framework replacing the cold-war-era Coordinating Committee on Export Controls (Coccom).

Russian officials said their domestic legislation prevented compliance with a requirement to tell the Wassenaar secretariat about any

sale which another member government had ruled out for its companies.

Russia's non-compliance would mean that if Britain, for example, refused to sell a piece of sensitive equipment to Pakistan and duly notify the secretariat, Russia could secretly sell the same piece of equipment, making the whole arrangement a commercial and political nonsense.

The Soviet Union, which exported arms worth an average of \$14 billion a year, lost out badly to Western rivals after cold war ended, but Russia is now set to sell \$7 billion worth this year.

A Russian official said: "They want us to open up everything, but we say it could cause disadvantages for us. We favour a reasonable degree of transparency and mutual consultation but these measures should not be detrimental to our national security interests."

There will be an attempt to revive the talks in July.

An ORNAMENT



The MALT



The MACALLAN

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AND EVERYONE WHO KNOWS IT, FOR

MAKING IT The MALT

Will they, won't they?

The IRA can't stop the talks — but others may

WITH the 80th anniversary of the 1916 Rising looming, it was not surprising that the IRA again seized the Northern Ireland headlines yesterday with its militant Easter statement. The combination of this year's resumed bombing campaign, and the IRA's fondness for anniversaries, freshly spiced by Michael Howard's latest anti-terrorism legislation, all conspire to foster a tense new atmosphere in Britain this week-end. Once again, the prospects for Northern Ireland and the actions of the IRA seem to be indissolubly bound together. If a bomb goes off today, tomorrow or indeed at any time, then that link will of course seem stronger than ever.

This is exactly the situation that the IRA seeks to encourage. But it cannot be right that Anglo-Irish policy should hinge entirely on their actions. And we would also be deluding ourselves if we believed that it does. A fresh IRA bombing would naturally be an indefensible and provocative act of destruction with political consequences. But what would it tell us that we don't already know well? Nothing. We know that the IRA is committed to the so-called armed struggle in pursuit of its republican objectives. We also know that it wants to take part in negotiations towards those ends. But it is not true that the Northern Ireland political process depends on whether there is a bombing or not. The IRA ceasefire is over anyway, and the political process goes on more or less regardless.

Another meeting between Sir Patrick Mayhew and Dick Spring merits few headlines these days, especially by comparison with a bit of IRA sabre-rattling. Yet this week in Dublin, the two ministers again got down to the detailed preparations for all-party talks. The reality is that the IRA's actions and Northern Ireland political developments are parallel rather than opposed.

On the surface, the British and Irish governments naturally hope for an IRA ceasefire to ease the next phase of negotiations. Underneath, however, they work on the assumption that there will be no such thing. The best expectation is that nothing will happen to make things worse. The elections scheduled for the end of next month will go ahead, whether Sinn Féin decides to participate in them or not. The June 10 talks will start as appointed, regardless of whether Sinn Féin takes part.

This week's byelections in the Irish Republic make it more likely that this untidy but realistic state of affairs will continue. The Dublin government parties, particularly Mr Spring's Labour Party, took a hammering from the opposition Flanna Fáil, thus increasing the pressure for results and for a less exclusionary approach to Sinn Féin. Meanwhile Sinn Féin's own modestly improved showing, doubling its share of the poll in both byelections (while still remaining firmly in single figures), makes it more of a stakeholder in the process. These results will strengthen the pressures on the IRA not to proceed with fresh bombings.

None of this means that the Northern Ireland elections, when they take place, will feed seamlessly into the talks process as optimistically intended in London and Dublin. Nor does it mean that the all-party talks, when they begin, will be in any way straightforward. The British government has already begun trying to alter the mechanics of the talks to make the procedure more acceptable to the Ulster Unionists. There is also a real danger that the talks will immediately collapse on June 10 over the decommissioning question. In some respects the biggest unsolved problem is not how to stop Sinn Féin dictating the agenda and destroying the process, but how to stop the Unionists from doing the same thing.

Armed for all eventualities

Weapons sales are as lucrative as ever for the big powers

WHEN arms control talks break down, it is supposed to be bad news. But yesterday's derailment of the Vienna talks is not a devastating event — because even if successful they would do nothing to curb the global traffic in death. The central aim of the "Wassenaar arrangement" is to keep weapons and "dual use" technology out of the hands of a few rogue countries such as Iraq or North Korea. Successor to the cold war COCOM regime which pursued a similar policy towards the communist bloc, it is not designed to reduce arms sales but to target the bad guys. Only the names have changed.

Russia is anxious to boost arms exports in order to alleviate its economic problems. Arms orders for this year have risen to \$7 billion against only \$2.8 billion last year — though this is still far below average annual sales of \$14 billion by the former Soviet Union. The US is equally keen to maintain and preferably increase its own much higher market share. President Clinton's directive last year on conventional arms transfer policy included "enhancing the ability of the US defence industrial base to meet US defence requirements." US arms sales agreements in 1994 totalled \$12 billion, and the Pentagon predicts that the world share should increase from about half to 63 per cent by the year 2000.

The Wassenaar Arrangement has 28 countries representing most major arms producers. But it has been dominated by a "small group" of six: the US,

France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Britain. In normal language this is a cartel. The philosophy behind it is well conveyed by Britain's claim that it seeks to enhance international stability through a "responsible" policy of arms sales — and also to "ensure a level playing field for British industry." For a few sober seconds after the Gulf War, the big dealers swallowed hard and said they would exercise restraint in marketing conventional weapons. The October 1991 Paris communiqué of the Permanent Five produced an eight-point list of self-denying conditions which has been largely ignored. Under international pressure a UN register of conventional arms was established in the same year. In 1995 only half of the world's countries provided data for this voluntary record which has no provision for monitoring or enforcement. It shows that the US and Russia have been joined by Germany as the world's largest arms exporters. Countries receiving tanks, armoured vehicles and fighter aircraft in 1994 included such oases of stability as Cambodia, Angola, Nigeria and Turkey.

The breakdown of the talks arises from Russia's reluctance to provide advance information which might prejudice its access to markets of which the US disapproves. It is not a dispute over the ethics of selling arms to countries which cannot afford and do not need them. On this there is sadly no dispute: arms "transfers" — the word "sales" is avoided — are still a jolly good thing.

More room for a view

The Florentines are causing a fine old Firenze

DEMAND to view the world's art treasures hugely outstrips the supply of opportunities to see them, as those who have queued for hours outside the Tate Gallery's Cézanne exhibition this spring will confirm. But if conditions outside the Tate sometimes seem frustrating, they will soon be as nothing to those which the city of Florence now seeks to impose on its visitors.

The days have long gone in which it was possible to wander through Florence like a character from an E.M. Forster novel, with or without a Baedeker. The culture vulture visitation in Italy's great historic centres at peak times of the year now regularly amounts to an infestation by the human species. Venice and Florence are barely worth entering in the summer months, so crammed have they become with backpackers, touring parties and — though not in the case of Venice, of course — their vehicles.

Something had to be done. Earlier this year, the Florentines ordered a 70 per cent cut in the number of coaches allowed into the city's narrow streets. Now a reservations-only policy is proposed for entry into the city's galleries — including the Uffizi, Bargello and Pitti. And Italian churches are increasingly contemplating the hitherto unthinkable — charging for entry to view their frescoes and carvings.

In the past, Italians managed to frustrate visitors by the expedient of closing buildings for long lunch hours or by locking their treasures away in *reservato*. To this day, far too many Italian galleries — including the Uffizi — display only a fraction of their collections. The new schemes are the latest in an extensive repertoire devised by Italians to deter visitors from reaching the art treasures. But if they think this will prevent a nation of queuers like the British, they underestimate us.



Letters to the Editor

The wrong arm of the law

DR C A GEARTY'S fears about the new "anti-terrorist" stop-and-search laws potentially being used against mainstream extra-parliamentary dissent (Letters, April 2) already have substance. Over the past three months, 768 people have been arrested for protesting against the Newbury bypass.

You reported on March 27 that the Association of Chief Police Officers has requested the support of the anti-terrorist branch to "gather intelligence" about environmental activists, specifically those from Newbury. How long will it be before the Newbury protesters (and others identified in videos of the Friends of the Earth march in February) become the subject of harassment?

Newbury has been the most recorded (filmed) protest ever. Will this footage be used to identify individuals in the fashion of football hooliganism? What of the reliance on security guard filmed beating up Balin with his shield on the national news?

What criteria will be used for those enacting these new powers? Long hair, dreadlocks or earrings? A name like Balin, Arthur, Pendragon or Ben Moon? Membership of Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth? Being a mountaineer, an archaeologist or a druid? An address in Newbury (for feeding protesters)? Or for writing a letter such as this to a national newspaper? (Dr) Tim Oxley, 6A Stratford Road, Cosgrove, Northants MK19 7JA.

THE decision by the Home Secretary to reintroduce draconian police powers to "stop and search" will send shivers of alarm through black communities across Britain. No opportunity has been provided for debate or consideration of the likely effects of the new powers.

Such powers have in the past, as with the notorious "SUS" laws, resulted in unjust and discriminatory treatment of the black communities, already suffering under increased police powers. Taken together with the internal controls contained in the Asylum and Immigration Bill they may well worsen relations between black communities and the police.

Given the recent black deaths in custody and widespread unease about the potential for abuse of CS gas and US-style long-handled batons, it is time that serious attention was given to resolving the problems which already exist rather than risking exacerbating them further.

The new powers should be repealed, and CS gas and long-handled batons should be withdrawn.

Diane Abbott MP.
Harry Cohen MP.
Lee Jasper.
National Assembly Against Racism.
Atma Singh.
National Black Alliance.
Helen Shaw & Deborah Coles.
Co-directors, Inquest.
John Wadham.
Director, Liberty.
c/o 38 Commercial Street, London E2.

JOHN HUTTON MP takes Martin Kettle to task for failing "to grasp the nettle" (Letters, April 4). He claims that the new powers given to the police "will not prevent all terrorist attacks. But they might succeed in permitting the early detection of some. This is justification enough for these extra powers". (My emphasis).

Is there to be no rational discussion at all? No terrorist attacks were detected by the Prevention of Terrorism Act. If the vague possibility of such a crime being detected "is justification enough" for powers which will be virtually unchallengeable, there is no logical ground for refusing to allow the police to use the techniques of interrogation, such as hooding and sensory deprivation, which were used in Northern Ireland until they were condemned by the European Court of Human Rights as inhuman and degrading.

When the new measures fail, as they inevitably will, what further police powers will John Hutton and his colleagues tamely accept? Malcolm Hurwitz, 61 Mintern Avenue, Southall, Middx UB2 4HP.

I AM confused. Is the Guardian which criticises Labour's approach to the Prevention of Terrorism (Additional Powers) Bill the same Guardian which backed the introduction of internment in Northern Ireland in 1971? Stephen Doherty, 25 Five Acres, Strabane, Co Tyrone BT22 3JD.

Why lone parents don't want child support from the agency

IT IS highly dangerous to assume that lone parents who have not communicated with the Child Support Agency are claiming benefits fraudulently (Defiance may cost lone mothers dear, April 3).

The Government's proposal to double the current benefit penalty for lone parents who do not co-operate with the agency appears to be based on the findings of a survey conducted as part of a review of the requirement for lone parents to co-operate with the agency unless they can show they should be exempt. But the researchers themselves point out that the sample used for the survey was not statistically significant.

If the benefit reduction becomes policy, the findings of interviews with 72 lone parents could be used to justify imposing draconian penalties on a further 50,000 a year. Fraud was suspected or established in less than half of the sample. Fifty thousand lone parents could receive a benefit penalty without evidence of fraud, and among them will be many who are genuinely at risk of violence or real distress and fear for themselves and their children.

Fraud, of course, must be tackled: there is already liaison between the Benefits Agency and the CSA to combat this. The CSA's role is to deliver maintenance to lone

parents and their children. More severe penalties would not add to incentives to ensure co-operation. What would help would be an efficient and effective assessment and collection service that would inspire lone-parent confidence in the system.

Karin Pappenheim, Director, National Council for One-Parent Families, 255 Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2LX.

I HAVE talked to a wide range of parents about the practical effects of the Child Support Act on their lives. It is clear that women who opt for the benefit penalty, or who argue for an exemption rather than co-operate with the CSA, do not find this an easy option. They do it for the emotional well-being of their children; to maintain the delicate balance of relations with their ex-partner; or to avoid an ex-partner re-entering their family life and wreaking havoc.

In education, ministers loudly proclaim the virtues of parental choice, but parents on benefit have no choice about CSA intervention in their family life. For many parents-with-care, avoiding the CSA is a damage-limitation exercise. Sean Butteridge, 32 Lord Lane, Fallowfield, Manchester M15 0SJ.

The tame and lame hit back

TAKE issue with Professor Vile Allen and Trevor Fisher (Letters, April 2) over Tony Blair's plans to ballot Labour Party members on a pre-manifesto document. Why are they so grudging and griping? You would think that Tony Blair was the enemy rather than John Major. If some of our members are more equal than others, and if we don't trust them, how do we expect the electorate to trust us?

This move opens up for the first time direct involvement and ownership of the manifesto to 350,000 ordinary party members. Most importantly, it commits Labour to deliver. Those who have been given ownership will be most annoyed if it is taken away by a government that fails to deliver its promises. Glyn Ford MEP, 46 Stamford Road, Mossley, Lancs OL5 0BE.

ACCORDING to Professor Allen I am a tame, lame member of the Labour Party. I hope that other members will

find this description as offensive as I do. I have been a Labour supporter for 60 or more years and no leader has ever before asked my opinion on anything. Even if I can say no more than "yes" or "no" to Tony Blair's pre-election manifesto, that in itself will be a welcome and significant step towards greater democracy in the party.

Eric Bourne, The Croft, Mildale, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 3GB.

PROFESSOR Allen is frightened that "tame" Labour Party members are going to be brainwashed by their newspapers and TV into supporting our leader's manifesto. I sometimes wonder how I ever managed to join the party in the first place, given my obvious susceptibility to media indoctrination. Mr Blair is offering a truly democratic manifesto for the first time ever. Phil Woodford, London N4.

Contra-dicted

FRANCIS COTTAM's analysis of male (ir)responsibility in sexual relationships is incomplete (The pill men find hard to swallow, April 3).

Sexual intercourse with a male-pill user may protect a woman against pregnancy but this is only one of several potential unwanted consequences of sexual intercourse between men and women. Sexually-transmitted infections, pelvic inflammatory disease, sub-fertility, cervical cancer and HIV are equally avoidable.

Male opinion-shapers such as Mr Cottam should address sexual health holistically, finding ways to persuade his stereotypical holidaying hooligans, squaddies, gym junkies and boy racers to use condoms in their sexual relationships in order to prevent other unwanted sequelae of sexual intercourse. That might be a real breakthrough in improving sexual health in the 1990s. Martin Jones, Kinfauns Avenue, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22.

AFTER years of running the gamut of devices and pills while searching for the perfect contraceptive (or at least, the least unacceptable), I have found that fertility awareness enables me to recognise the continuous signals from my body during my monthly cycle, freeing me to use artificial contraception only on the few days that I actually need it. It is efficient, easy, safe and satisfying.

More sympto-thermal method of natural family planning is recognised to be as effective as the pill — the Family Planning Association rates it at up to 98 per cent — without any of the side-effects. Very few GPs understand the method and do not discuss it with patients seeking advice. The solution is to teach our emerging teenage girls at school to understand their bodies, recognise the signals, and take pride in the effective functioning of their bodies. Abigail Hall, All Saints Lane, Godalming, Surrey GU8.



Cash-for-questions at the House

THE claim that a £5 entry fee to the Houses of Parliament (April 4) would do away with the "inappropriate" black economy within the building appears to be a crafty way of combining two separate issues. While pretending to be cleaning up sleaze, the Serjeant-at-Arms is going to raise himself a tidy income of about £750,000 a year.

Currently, if you hire a guide, the usual fee is £20 for a group of up to 16 people: this is usually paid direct to the guide. Imposing a £5 entry fee will no doubt end this practice. However, it will also force schools to pay about £150 to take a class of children around, something which they can presently do for free.

I accept there has to be some restriction on the numbers of people getting in each day, as the building is primarily a working one. But, if the Serjeant-at-Arms has a problem with tax evasion, he should contact the authorities and pe-

nalise those at fault, not the general public by charging them for entrance to their own parliament building. Name and address supplied.

THE proposal to charge for a tour of Parliament strikes the right chord at this time of our national history. The senior attendants should be John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown, who could relate the Palace of Westminster's glorious history as the site of the supreme law-making body of the United Kingdom. However, the charge should not be £5 but 30 silver Euros, to be shared between the three attendants. Gerald Hartop, Director.

The Freedom Association, 35 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB.

We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We may edit them; shorter letters are more likely to appear.

From nags to riches

COMING from other newspapers, Roy Greenslade (Cross the t's, dot the i's, pocket the cash, April 4) is unaware of the Guardian's own contributions to the tradition of imaginative expense claims. When I was a young hopeful on the paper, and the Guardian's presence in London was a set of grubby rooms in Fleet Street, senior staff didn't muck about.

The story related at that time concerned the great Guy Wint, who, back from a prolonged Asian trip (made at

some personal risk), was ordered to itemise in detail his considerable expenses. With some ill grace, he submitted a claim with the item: To taking horse up in lift... £500.

Now there was a man who wouldn't stoop to bogus itemises with nubile actresses. The legend said the claim was never questioned. Even if apocryphal, it catches the flavour of the great days of Fleet Street. John Pilgrim, 70 Magdalen Drive, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4EF.

A Country Diary

NORTHUMBERLAND: We are creeping about under the bridge at Mitford and plodding in the shallows of the Wansbeck river bank. Six years since its launch, Northumberland Wildlife Trust's bid to attract others back to our rivers is succeeding. Martin Twiss, the Otter Project warden, finds a spraint on a fallen log in the river a hundred yards from the centre of Mitford; we gather round to examine it and sniff the fishy aroma. "An otter can have a 20-mile territory with several holes," he tells us. "It will swim a watercourse running right through a town." Otters are at the top of the aquatic food chain and their presence in a river system is an indication of its well-being.

To find otter signs you look under the banks of the river, not on them, amongst tree roots, rocky ledges and shingle benches. Four otters have recently been killed on roads in this county and two more orphan cubs rescued since the dramatic rescue of the twins three years ago from the hollow tree on the River

Till. "These calamities are sad but they indicate that we have increasing numbers of otters now," said Martin. River banks have been fenced off from cattle and planted with willow, birch, hedges and shrubs. Many artificial holts have been completed and show evidence of occupation.

After a picnic lunch, our party moves on to Hartburn, six miles up the Wansbeck valley to continue the search for pug marks and spraints. No one is expecting to see a ring of bright water on this exploratory expedition. That heart-stopping moment when you see that tiny, rounded, sleek, dark head gliding through the water leaving the characteristic V in its wake is more likely to be witnessed at dusk or dawn. One of our party had recently seen an otter on the North Tyne river. "I was fishing alone," he told us. "And got a perfect view of the animal which floated and dived among weeds and never saw me." So often it is solitary anglers who do see otters. VERONICA HEATH

Diary

Matthew Norman

THE DIARY (note how it's always that impersonal entity, and never the personal pronoun, at such moments) is in disgrace. A Home Office press person calls to report that prisons minister and volatile Papist Ann Widdecombe is "a bit miffed". She is not, after all, spending Easter on a Club 18-50 pleasure jaunt (a "shag-fest" in her own ribald argot) to Corfu. In fact, she is making a four-day prison tour, and will be duty minister. (Michael Howard was originally scheduled in, but his mother Hilma has sent a sick note to Number 10, saying he was in danger of developing one of his colds.) "Miss Widdecombe has never been to Corfu, is not going to Corfu and has no plans to go to Corfu," says the press officer. (I sense an opening for a certain island's Tourist Board.) "She's a bit miffed at your mistake because she'll be working right through the holiday." Oh dear, will she have no time for prayer at 7? "She usually fits in a couple of church services, and I'm sure she will this year." Phew. But not on Cor-phew? "No, no, no. Definitely not on Corfu..."

I Miss Widdecombe's prison tour takes in Huddersfield, she may well meet my old friend Raza Smith, who is there doing a long spell of Her Majesty's pleasure for armed robbery. Raza is known as a poet, and especially for the much admired *Old Legs*, in which he memorably parodied the innocence-protestant inmate as follows: "It's funny you should ask I'm here for what I didn't do, I didn't want to..." In the new edition of Prison Writing, however, he chooses prose in which to deliver useful careers advice. "The greatest assets any prisoner can bring to the job are a sense of humour, plenty of patience, the ability to appreciate the absurd," Raza writes, "and a good quality knuckle-duster. I favour the brass type (without spikes) and I always go for the body..."

THE winner of the competition to run a mile of the Flora London Marathon with Charles Kennedy, the radio personality who earns pin money moonlighting as a LibDem MP, is the supremely well-named H H Asquith of west London. Mr Asquith guesses the MP's weight at 171 pounds — two more than an official figure that does credit to the former gut-bucket's fitness campaign.

FOR sale lately have been loft apartments in the Beaux-Arts Building on Islington's busy Holloway Road. "Enjoy the fine art of loft living from only £91," it says at the top of the Ballymore Properties flysheet. It begins with familiar stuff — "state-of-the-art amenities, exquisite detail and generous proportions", that kind of guff — until, without warning, it breaks new ground. "Naturally-external rhythm," it says. Naturally-external rhythm — what can this be? At Ballymore Properties, a man was very helpful. "I have no idea," he said. "I couldn't possibly mean 'lots of noisy traffic', could I? Er, um, I'm not at all sure. I, er..."

In what must surely be a bid to resurrect his image, David Ashby, the Tory MP who shared a bed with a male friend on a holiday to save a few quid and brought financial ruin upon himself as a result, will be a guest when Have I Got News For You returns to BBC2 in a fortnight. Other guests in the series will include the seriously talented Janet Street-Porter and Rupert Allason (the MP who will sue anyone who calls him "the most litigious man in England"). As for David Ashby, who must have been keeping his wit in check for just such an opportunity, we salute him. The line between courage and foolishness can be very hard to spot. We admire his vision, and wish him luck.

FURTHER evidence emerges that Lionel Blair is indeed the hoover's leftwing credentials have been greatly strengthened by the news that his dog goes by the name of Eric.



Life and death in other worlds

Commentary

Peter Preston

WE CALLED it the Zorza salad and I guess my children will remember it for as long as they live. A bit of everything to hand. Diced chunks of cucumber, carrot, apple, cauliflower and orange; radishes, spring onions, grapes, mushrooms, maybe a few dates and nuts, with the lightest of vinaigrette dressings. Victor used to make it himself for lunch, to be eaten with roast chicken on this steep, grassy slope down from Dairy Cottage to the big green pond lying listless on the hottest of summer days.

I was catching a plane to the Middle East a fortnight ago when the news of Victor Zorza's death came through. You paused, and sucked the air a little. The obituarists (here and elsewhere) did splendidly. They told of the young Pole who escaped the Nazis, came to England and became the Journalist of Several Years for his uncanny Kremlinology. They saw him off to America and a syndicated column, then to India to live and write from a peasant village, then to Moscow to found and fund a hospice.

They made him seem remarkable. But they only had half the ingredients for a real Zorza salad.

Journalists like to think of themselves as professionals — doctors, lawyers, that sort of thing. Wrong. They're tradesmen and sometimes the trade is rough. Victor, though, was the nearest thing to a professional man I ever encountered on the Guardian.

He was usually unique; he was usually impossible. The analyses emerged from a tight-packed reference and monitoring library on the sunless side of Dairy Cottage. They were not light reading. Nor could they in any way be subverted, let alone short-circuited. Cutting meant dispensing with the evidence gleaned day-by-day from Pravda, Tass, Izvestia and the routine outpourings of the Soviet news machine. Victor dealt in significant half sentences of facts or chilly adjectives, building a picture of what was happening inside the Kremlin from what those on the outside were told. How could that be? "But look," I said one difficult night. "It fills the whole bloody page and it's still 20 inches over."

"What else is there on the page?" he asked. "Nothing but an ad," said Zorza. "You must drop the advertisement." He was infinitely stubborn. He played off his politics like a street fighter. He remembered his triumphs of prediction. (Golly, how we heard and we heard again about the day the Red Army rolled into Prague.)

He had total amnesia when the prophesies came to dust. In his small, compact, bustling way, he was like some masterful heart surgeon pounding through crowded wards, harassed juniors trailing in his wake.

I never, to be honest quite believed in the technique. It seemed to rest on the belief that every semi-colon in every statement from the Soviet Foreign Ministry had been weighed and balanced by experts to drop plangent clues as though for some international power game. I couldn't credit that anyone — even Pravda — could produce a newspaper that way, without chaos or deliberate mistakes or columns of lead type dropped on the composing-room floor by some vodka-racked timehand as deadlines neared. "Sure," said Victor impatiently, "perhaps that happens sometimes. Perhaps that's when my analyses go wrong."

The heart-surgeon bit was not without irony. In the late '70s after Victor had left the Guardian and gone to America, he returned to say the doctors did not give his own heart more than a couple of years. Kremlinology was a spending duck. He didn't wish to spend his last months brooding over its entanglements. "The Third World is the new world. I'm going to move there and work there." We talked South America. We talked South Africa. We settled on India. Not the south, I said, the south is a cauldron. He didn't appear to know that — and, indeed, was

reported angry when the car that picked him up at the airport lacked air conditioning. It was, like most Zorza enterprises, a package of funding — with some mysterious chunks of UN money thrown in at the beginning. The village column came to the Guardian (and other clients around the world) then pottered off to the Times in one of those mild severances where money was a half-issue. I didn't think it quite worked. Victor's prose (except, magically, in the book he wrote with his wife about the hospice death of their only daughter, Jane) was spare and serviceable. He could not often make the rhythms of peasant life beat with emotion. But as failures go, it was magnificent failure. And then, silence.

He popped up again once the Berlin Wall fell down, of course. He had passed through Moscow. He had seen — because of Jane — the ma-

Victor was the nearest thing to a professional man I ever encountered on the Guardian

levolent unconcern for the slowly dying. He was going to start just one, then another, hospice. He was out of journalism for ever as the old heart ticked on.

Last summer he wrote again from Dairy Cottage, offering us a Sunday in the sun. It was not alas, possible; and so the letter in November stood in sharper relief. Victor was looking for funds, hospice cash to keep doctors and nurses paid by the month. When he called, he wanted something that was usually the way he was. But did I know that I'd been responsible for his finding his lost

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS 9

Thanks for the naked blind girl, Dennis



Bel Littlejohn

SHATTERED, literally shattered. That's how I felt after watching my first Dennis Potter play on television all those years ago. I forgot its name, but it involved a naked blind girl being raped to the music of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Its effect was so overwhelming that when it was over I found it quite hard to concentrate on the repeat of I Love Lucy that followed, though after a reviving glass of dry white I sat back and enjoyed some bloody good laughs with that lovely old stalwart of TV comedy.

"Bloody": that's a word I couldn't have used in journalism before Dennis Potter came along. Now I can bloody well use it as much as I want. I find it places emphasis on the anger I feel at the way this world is going. And anger is an emotion Potter knew one helluva lot about.

As is well known, Potter started his career as a TV playwright writing episodes of Dixon of Dock Green. This provided excellent grounding for his subsequent career, teaching him structure and character development. "Evenin' fuckin' all," begins the amiable George Dixon in Potter's first scripted episode for the series. Dixon then continues in his soft, avuncular voice: "You know, folks, sometimes in a police force there crops up what we ordinary coppers call a 'bad apple'." Shifty types, without a shred of ordinary human honesty. You can spot 'em a mile off. PC Arthur Bent was one such, and blow me down if his bobby wasn't raping naked blind girls to the tunes of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

Unbelievably, this script proved so far ahead of its time that BBC bosses refused to let it be transmitted without massive changes. Eventually, Arthur Bent was turned into a Good Apple and given a fresh bobby — betting on the greyhounds. But 10 years later Potter was able to use the germ of his brilliant idea in 10 separate drama series — and to devastating effect.

After an unhappy time drafting unused scripts for the presenters of BBC TV's Blue Peter programme ("This fuckin' bastid wood's bloody useless for makin' bleedin' traction engines," says Christopher Trace at a crucial moment, to which the youthful Valerie Singleton replies simply but effectively: "Shut your gob, arsehole."), Potter was moved sideways to the BBC Religious Affairs department. Here he at first seemed ideally

suitable to scripting the links on Songs Of Praise.

But here, too, there were undesirable hiccups. The first to make his objections plain was the Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Rev Roger Birtwhistle, who vehemently refused to introduce the well-loved family hymn All Things Bright And Beautiful with Potter's scripted words. "Fuck this for a game of soldiers — all things grim and bloody terrible, more like," complaining in the typically bourgeois manner of the so-called Established Church that some viewers might be "shocked and outraged" by such language.

Nuff said. But of course, the whole point of Potter lay in his ability to shock, to lift us as viewers out of our complacency. I'll never forget watching that bit in The Singing Detective where the blind girl is raped by her father while he mimics a cheerful melody of the music of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Let me tell you this: never in my life had I been so shocked out of my complacency. I straightaway changed my ideas about everything I ever thought I knew, and the very next morning I marched headlong into the garden-furnishings department at Peter Jones and ordered a 80 per cent "Task Force" Persian Garden Bench, just like the one the blind girl had been lying on. That's the kind of effect Potter had on viewers. These days, whenever I feel an attack of complacency coming on, I slot The Singing Detective into the video, within minutes I can congratulate myself on shedding all my complacency.

It was typical of the man that he should broadcast his dying wishes to Melvyn on camera. First, he demanded that the final two plays be produced and broadcast jointly by BBC and Channel 4. Then he demanded — off camera, but no less forcefully — that BBC boss John Birt and Channel 4 boss Michael Grade should set off together on a bicycling holiday in the New Forest on a tandem bought jointly by their two companies. He further insisted that the two should stop at all the landmarks portrayed in Potter's shockingly memorable Pennies From Heaven, and that they should wear Lycra cycling shorts purchased exclusively from Millets.

The two bosses were only too eager to comply with Potter's demands rather than be thought in any way churlish or cowardly. This morning, I received a chatty postcard from the two of them, sent from exactly the spot where the blind girl was raped to the music of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in Pennies From Heaven. Potter was a visionary who despised more than anything the mute acceptance of dictatorial commands. It is up to all of us in the media to prove him right, and to do whatever he wanted.

Members only

Patrick Donovan argues that a building society going public, far from encouraging boardroom greed, is likely to root out abuse. Below, Hector Laing laments the decline in British business ethics

YOU might have expected such a venerable organisation as the Woolwich Building Society to operate a much tighter system of ethics than the conventional Stock Exchange listed company. After all, the home-loans giant is part of the mutual-society movement, an enlightened system through which organisations are owned by their investing "members". There are no shares or profits to distribute to rapacious City investors. And yet the story of

Peter Robinson's alleged expense irregularities shows that such organisations may be far easier to exploit by financially motivated executives than their stockmarket-listed equivalents.

To many outside the charmed world of the executive boardroom, the process of going for a stockmarket listing is an instant recipe for huge "fat cat" pay rises and massive share options. True, directors such as British Gas's Cedric Brown, who were quite prepared to spend most of their working lives

earning relatively modest salaries, pocketed unacceptably high pay-rises after their share listing. And such listings inevitably involve sackings among the staff to boost the attraction to potential investors. But the flip side of this is that any company putting itself up for a stockmarket listing is subjected to the most detailed auditing controls. The preparation of a flotation prospectus involves teams of bankers and accountants examining in minute detail every aspect of its financial affairs.

Ironically, it was this very process which uncovered the allegations against Peter Robinson. For the Woolwich is itself planning to abandon its mutual status and sell off its shares. And the trail of suspect expense claims only came to light when its own internal audit team decided to spring-clean its accounts,

ready for their presentation to its financial advisers.

It is entirely possible that Robinson's alleged expense abuses may not have come to light if the Woolwich had not subjected itself to the intense scrutiny of City investors. Or if they had been uncovered, there would have been far less pressure on the remaining management to undergo the huge embarrassment of making a public statement.

Much can be said about the "worthiness" of mutual societies, co-operatives and the like. Of course they all have laudable objectives, and they have many passionate and genuine supporters. But as the Robinson saga has shown, companies which are not directly responsible to demanding shareholders may be far more vulnerable to abuse by their top directors. The Woolwich may now be owned by the people

who lend it money. But the practical result is that directors such as Robinson enjoy comparatively untrammelled power in the way they run their businesses. Robinson was not even required to obtain a counter-signature for his expense accounts. This is a world where a chief executive is an absolute law to himself. This kind of behaviour would be highly unlikely within most big listed companies.

This is the fatal flaw of "alternative" or "co-operative" businesses. Such businesses ultimately rely on trust. But real life does not work like that: these types of business are an open invitation to abuse.

The City, by contrast, operates on suspicion: an assumption that everybody is out to make a swift buck and hang the consequences. The Square Mile may be reviled for encouraging greed, but the markets operate on a cynical and entirely accurate appreciation of human nature. That is why any large-scale experiment in business ethics will be long in coming.

On our worst behaviour

EVERYBODY needs a bible or a reference point outside themselves. In a company, that means — as it did to me when I was chairman of United Biscuits — a company ethics policy. That policy, which should be signed by the chairman and chief executive, should cover all those things which management believe to be essential to the ethical operation of the company.

It seems to me that in today's world, too much emphasis is put on self, money and expediency — ie short-termism — and too little on the values which benefit the company and country in the longer term. I believe the cause can be traced to a society which demands rewards which are not likely to be possible

if that society does not take a longer-term view to coincide more nearly with that of our major competitors, particularly those in the Pacific rim.

Our ethics booklet at United Biscuits, which we sent out in 1987, went to shareholders at the annual meeting and was widely briefed inside the company. In it I wrote: "Some employees might have the mistaken idea that we do not care how results are obtained. As long as we get results, we may from time to time have offended against some part or parts of our ethics policy; but I did ask our auditors to let me know if or when they found a conflict. I believe that this attitude to business is likely to be beneficial in the long run. Principle giving way to expedi-

ency is a slippery slope. We also seem to have forgotten that a company's ethics come from the stature of the leadership in that company. Management is important, but leaders are essential, as Viscount Slim of Burma said.

Leaders must stand out ahead of others morally and in every way. Leadership needs to start at school, and be taught and trained at every stage in which people progress in business. Those who remember the second world war know how essential was the leadership of a commanding officer that form of leadership is perhaps thought nowadays to be outdated. Yet British companies are fighting an economic war, whether we like it or not: we only have to look at the leadership that has made the mark, or the yen, or the dollar, so strong against the pound to see

that we are not getting things right. Our companies need to place more emphasis on character and leadership, and perhaps less on pure intellectual achievement. We need to challenge our attitudes as a matter of urgency.

In part this is up to the owners of a company — and our institutional shareholders were always telling me they were the owners — to take more interest in a company's ethics, its investment levels, and the amount it spends on research and development. It is not a losing battle. For if people who belong to a company know that the company has ethics and stands by them, they will work more effectively and efficiently.

Lord Laing of Dunphail was chairman and chief executive of United Biscuits until 1980. He is former president of the Institute of Business Ethics

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Ron Brown

Clinton's smooth dealer

RON Brown, who has died in a plane crash near Dubrovnik aged 54, was the smartest operator in the Democratic Party. He arranged things, he got things done, with a style and success that no one else had managed in 20 years. In 1968, he ran Jesse Jackson's campaign for the presidency, and at just the right moment had his candidate bow the knee to his rival, Michael Dukakis. In 1982, he moved smoothly, he eased Jackson out of the way to make the nominating convention into a love-fest for Bill Clinton.

He was the personification of the Washington insider-lobbyist-politician, like Robert Strauss of Texas, who was one of his predecessors as chairman of the Democratic Party. The difference was that Brown was black, with a strong claim to be the most successful black politician in the country.

He was also a highly successful businessman, of the deal-making variety, and his skill at conjuring large sums of money out of a few phone calls got him into serious trouble. The *Wall Street Journal*, which attacks Clinton and his administration with unrelenting fervour, once asserted that Brown's Washington was a place of Honest Graft. "The world of this charming, sartorially splendid lawyer-lobbyist is one of money, influence-peddling, and ethical insensitivity."

A special prosecutor had been looking into his dealings for the past year, and the Republicans had high hopes of pulling him down. He was accused of setting up small companies, which he would then sell at a huge profit to people who had business with the federal government, and failing to report these dealings.

There are plenty of smooth and charming lawyers in Washington, but very few black ones. He was a "new Democrat" in the mould of Bill Clinton, who never lost his touch with the liberals and the underprivileged in the party. He was also a most successful secretary of commerce. This, too, was a bravura performance. The Republicans who control Congress have been striving

ceaselessly to abolish the department. Brown confounded them by gathering teams of senior executives around him to further the President's international trade policies. He was constantly on the move, generating much useful publicity and also largely succeeding in interesting American business in the export market.

The Democratic party from the days of Lyndon Johnson to the late 1980s was in constant turmoil, with North and South, left and right, ceaselessly bickering. Brown, who joined in the fight in 1980, working for Edward Kennedy when he ran against President Carter, came to argue that the object was not to be right, but to win elections.

He persuaded a recalcitrant party to accept his novel doctrine after he became party chairman in 1989. He did not openly support Clinton during the primary season in 1992, he was meant to be neutral. But when Clinton nailed down the nomination, Brown made sure that the whole party swung behind him, and the convention was a triumph for party unity.

So was the campaign, and the continuing contrast between Democratic unity and Republican fratricide is largely Brown's legacy.

He was born in Washington in 1941 and grew up in New York, where his father was running a hotel in Harlem. He went to a small private university in Vermont, and to law school, partly financing it with four years in the army.

Like many other ambitious young men, he came to Washington for the politics, first with the Urban League (a black organisation), then with the Senate Judiciary Committee, where he worked for Teddy Kennedy. In the usual order of business, in due course he joined a top law firm there. He leaves a widow and two children, both of whom are lawyers.

Patrick Brown

Alexander Cockburn writes: No one was more smoothly symbolic of *fin-de-siècle* Washington than Ron Brown. Corruption breeds most rankly at the intersection between political parties, corporate lobbyists and the public trough, and that was where Brown



A helping hand for the corporated state... Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown

established his permanent residence. The hats he wore varied. But his essential function remained the exertion of influence, the application of grease, the smoothing of the corporate path.

In the early 1980s at the lobbying firm of Patton, Boggs & Blow, he signed a contract with the Sugar Growers of Guatemala, pledging to improve their image and advance their cause in Washington. On January 19, 1982, the day Brown closed the deal, the Sugar Growers' disciplinary representatives in the Guatemalan army began a series of assassinations that totalled 2,000 in the first four months of Brown's lobbying campaign.

Another client of Brown's at that time was the Haitian dictator, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier. A nine-page memo Brown sent Baby Doc in 1983 blamed the President's poor reputation on the American press, which had created an "unfair image" of the tyrant. Brown promised to

work hard to get more American money into the hands of his client.

Brown's terminal trip to the Balkans was typical of his voyages on behalf of the Fortune 500. In this instance the corporate top brass — from construction to telecommunications — were set to reap the fruits of victory, establishing the US as lead contractor in the reconstruction of Bosnia and Croatia. Earlier voyages had taken Brown to Russia, where in March 1994 he was with 28 chief executives from AT&T, Enron, Westinghouse, Dresser, Rockwell, and General Electric, announcing hundreds of million dollars worth of deals. In September 1994 he was in China with 25

businessmen celebrating victory in the battle to extend China's Most Favored Nation trading status. Twelve of those nabobs were major donors or fundraisers for the Democratic Party; their companies gave almost \$2 million to Democratic candidates during the 1993-94 election cycle.

Brown had a rare facility for matching countries, donors and the appetites of his party's treasury. In 1994 he got the Saudis to give Boeing a \$3.6 billion order for commercial aircraft. Within six months Boeing had placed \$65,000 in the accounts of the Democratic National Committee.

Corporate leaders loved Brown. No doubt the fact that he was African-American was especially pleasing as it suggested the dangerous classes and races were, contrary to the usual fears, recuperable. As James Treibig — boss of Tandem Computers Inc who negotiated a \$100 million joint venture agreement while in China with Secretary Brown — once told the *Wall Street Journal*, "Whether you're a Democrat or a Republican, you really have to respect this guy for what he's done for corporate America."

Ronald Harmon Brown, politician, born August 1, 1941; died April 3, 1996

Simon Nowell-Smith

A bibliophile with wit and generosity

SIMON Nowell-Smith, who has died aged 86, was a writer, bibliographer and book collector of great ability, whose sensitive awareness of each matter prevented him from realising his full potential. Any task he took on was handled with originality, elegance and thoroughness.

He was christened Simon Harcourt Nowell-Smith, adding the hyphen later to distinguish himself from many other Smiths, such as his father, Nowell Charles Smith, who edited the letters of another Smith, Sydney, the Whig wit, supporter of Catholic emancipation and habitué of Holland House. Nowell-Smith was the headmaster of Sherborne School, where his son was educated; it was not a comfortable relationship, nor did Simon wholly escape when he went on to New College, Oxford, of which his father was an honorary fellow. In 1932 he joined the staff of the Times, becoming assistant editor of the Times Literary Supplement under Sir Bruce Richmond in 1937.

Already a book-collector and absorbed by the intricacies of the manufacture and publishing of books, he persuaded Richmond to give him the back page to publish reviews and articles on bibliographical topics. A group of like-minded friends, Stanley Morison (already a power on the Times), John Carter, Graham Russell, John Heywood, Dudley Massie and Michael Sadleir, used to meet and dine once a month to "help Simon". This was the origin of the "Biblios" dining club; it was also an important influence in giving bibliographical studies, hitherto regarded as a sort of ancillary to more respectable academic pursuits, textual scholarship of literary criticism, and independent profile.

The "back page" lasted until the 1970s, and Simon contributed to it long after he had left the Times, to which he returned after the war (he spent the years in Naval Intelligence). In 1950, he was

persuaded by Harold Nicolson, then chairman of the London Library committee, to become its librarian. Simon brought needed fresh air in abundance. The library had been damaged, and war-time strains — diminished staff, the breaking of old links with the book trade and so on — had taken their toll. The new librarian saw to all this very well; he had also to revive the library's public image. But administering a large semi-public institution was not what he really wanted to do. He found an admirable deputy librarian Stanley Gilliam, and in 1956 made over the library to him.

He had begun collecting books before he went to Oxford, and Blackwell's habitual generosity in the matter of credit gave him a new impetus. He was at once creative and methodical; nat-



Nowell-Smith... an original

urally drawn to the 19th century, and to authors far from fashionable then, he began with the works of his uncle, Mark Rutherford, but moved on to make virtually complete collections of Robert Bridges and Henry James. The last led to his first and in some ways most original book, *The Legend of the Master* (1947), which aimed "to show Henry James as others saw him, and as far as possible in their own words". It was, in fact, a novel essay in biography, in which the writings of James's con-

temporaries were strung together on a thread of Simon's own construction. The result owed more to Max Beerbohm (than to Lytton Strachey). A similar device made *Letters to Macmillan* (1967) more lively than any conventional publisher's history, although that is no reflection on his *The House of Cassell*.

In many ways his most inventive and solid work was *International Copyright Law and the Publisher, 1830-1900* (1968). This was together the evolution of the law of copyright with the increasing market for English authors in America and vice-versa, with a mastery grasp of both strands. It was an enlarged version of the lectures he had given at Oxford, which now became his base. Thither he moved from his old home in Ewelme to Quarry Manor, Headington. There his collection was kept and continued to evolve. Bridges and James were shed in favour of 19th-century poets, and they in turn made way for "association copies" of favourite books, preferably those inscribed by one poet to another. These were exhibited at the Bodleian in 1983; he wrote the catalogue and entitled it "Wordsworth to Robert Graves and Beyond".

Simon was small in stature but handsome (and well aware of his good looks). He was generous with his time, generous, too, in benefactions to good causes, such as the Bibliographical Society of which he was president in 1963-64, and generous of most all in his patronage of young craftspeople. If his fastidious taste prevented him from realising all that he might have written or done, it gave his criticism a quality never to be forgotten by those on whom it was bestowed. They and others will remember his wit and generosity.

Nicholas Barker

Simon Harcourt Nowell-Smith, bibliophile, born January 6, 1909; died March 28, 1996

Letters

Marjorie Thompson writes: While we were delighted that you chose to feature the birthday of Herman Ouseley, our Chairman at the Commission for Racial Equality (*Weekend Birthdays*, March 23), could I just point out one or two factual errors? Herman was the first black director of education in Britain when he took up this post at Inner London Education Authority in 1986. He was then ILEA chief executive from 1988-90, and only became chief executive at Lambeth after ILEA's abolition that year. Incidentally we thought the picture looked a bit more like Yasser Arafat!

Ellisabeth Roussel writes: There is one correction I would like you to make to your fine obituary on Victor Zorza (March 22). A Way to Die was a joint venture written by Rosemary and Victor Zorza together. This was a remarkable book and had an immediate and profound effect in the United States.

Birthdays

Prof John Albery, Master, University College, Oxford, 60; Jane Asher, actress, cook, 50; Alberto Romero (Cubby) Broccoli, film producer, 67; Michael Bryant, actor, 68; James Buckley, chief executive, Baltic Exchange, 52; Andrew Buxton, chairman, Barclays Bank, 57; Allan Clarke, rock singer, 54; Roger Corman, film director and producer, 70; Agnetha Faltskog, singer with Abba, 46; Tom Finney, footballer, 74; Will Gaines, jazz dancer, 68; Dr John Gilbert, Labour MP, 69; Arthur Hailey, author, 76; Nigel Haworth, actor, 67; Sir Douglas Hensley, former Auditor-General, 77; Prof Denis Lawton, chairman, London University School Examinations Board, 65; Janice Long, radio presenter, 41; Prof Donald Lynden-Bell, astronomer, 67; Peter Moore, professor of Decision Science, London Business School, 68; Stan Orme, Labour MP, 73; Gregory Peck, actor, 80; Jen-

nifer Penney, ballerina, 50; Gen Colin Powell, former chairman, US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 58; Lord Rockley, chairman, Kleinwort Benson, 62; Brian Rouse, racing manager, 68; Tessa Solesby, diplomat, 64; Anne Scott-James, novelist and journalist, 83.

Death Notices

PHY-BROOKS, Rosalind Anne, (née Mulholland, formerly Salisbury) on 2nd April 1996, after a long illness aged 57 years. Adored and adoring mother of Jack and Terry. Beloved wife of John, daughter of Bill and Doris, sister of John and Clara. Family funeral at Salisbury Crematorium 11.40 a.m. on Wednesday 4th April 1996. Service of thanksgiving at Salisbury Hospice Care Trust c/o 11 Newman Ltd, Funeral Director, Griffin House, 65 Winchester Street, Salisbury Wiltshire SP1 1HL.

In Memoriam

DESPERADOS, Nigel George, April 5th 1925. Ten most beautiful and most intelligent yet we know we do not wait alone for you. We will miss you but the light that cannot be extinguished. Always your Christine.

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Carl Stokes

From the ghetto to City Hall

CARL Stokes, former mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, and the first black to achieve such a prominent political position in America, has died of cancer at the age of 68. Born in the Depression, his early years in Cleveland gave little indication that he would ever be more than another poverty-stricken inhabitant of the ghetto. His father died when he was two and his

mother had to support her family on meagre earnings as a maid supplemented by welfare support. The family was one of the early beneficiaries of President Roosevelt's economic recovery programme, being moved when Carl was 10 years old from a shared sium into new housing built specially for the urban poor as part of the New Deal.

But the continuing need for money obliged Carl to drop

out of secondary school and it was not until he was in his early twenties that he could afford to take up a course at the University of Minnesota. His extreme skill at billiards and pool, in which he was the university champion, helped bring in useful extra cash. On graduation, he went to the Marshall School of Law in Cleveland, and qualified as a lawyer in 1956.

After a brief career as a pro-

bation officer, he decided to go into private legal practice and, as is so often the case in the US, used that as the stepping stone to a political career. In 1963 he became the first black Democrat to be elected to the Ohio state legislature and, three years later, made an unsuccessful bid for mayoral office in Cleveland, running as an independent.

It was clear from this campaign that he was unlikely to win except on the Democratic ticket and, when he ran under the party banner two years later, the timing proved absolutely right. The political and social scene had been transformed by the powerful impact of President Johnson's avalanche of civil rights laws.

Stokes caused a national sensation by securing office with 50.5 per cent of the vote. Since blacks formed only 97 per cent of Cleveland's population at that time, he had plainly pulled in unprecedented support from white voters. Just as John Kennedy had removed religion as a bar to the White House, so Stokes's 1967 election helped eradicate race as one of the critical determinants in America's politics.

He came into office determined to halt the economic decline of his city and to add as much weight as he could to the national civil rights campaign. But he was faced with forces far greater than anything he could control.

The industrial erosion in the Rust Belt states was too deeply entrenched to be fought effectively from City

Hall. And the resulting social tensions were being compounded by the Vietnam war and the perception that it was largely being fought by poor and black Americans.

A confrontation in the long, hot summer of 1968 between local white police and a group of blacks, in which three policemen and six civilians died, precipitated disastrous and widespread rioting. Though Stokes was re-elected the following year, this disorder, as he wrote later, "was to haunt and colour every aspect of my administration for the next three years". He tried to reform the city's police department and to carry on with earlier efforts to attract industry and expand municipal housing but it was an uphill struggle. He decided not to run for a third term in 1971.

On leaving office he was snapped up by the New York affiliate of NBC Television to become anchor man for its main news programme, once again the first black to be given such a prominent media position. After eight years in that role, he went back to his Cleveland legal practice and in 1983 was made a judge of the municipal court, where he served two terms. In 1994 President Clinton appointed him US ambassador to the Seychelles but he was to take extended leave through illness.

Harold Jackson

Carl Burton Stokes, politician, born June 21, 1927; died April 4, 1996



Bright new morning... Stokes with wife Shirley after winning the Cleveland election

Mario Viegas

Critical face of Portugal

THE career of actor Mario Viegas, who has died aged 47, straddled the last years of dictatorship and the 1974 dawn of democracy in Portugal. He was an irrepressible free spirit in both worlds. From a theatrical family Viegas was a successful professional actor by the age of 20.

A slight man with an elastic face, his repertoire took in the Portuguese renaissance, Chekhov, Brecht, Beckford and slapstick. He was best-known as a

satirist, crowds flocked to the small Lisbon theatre he founded, and his review, *Europe Now! Portugal Now!* was a sardonic view of Portugal's European Community entry.

He was equally at home with television, radio and cinema, and took a series of poetry readings to the top of the television ratings in 1984. Seven years earlier, he played the eponymous anti-hero Kiki in José Fonseca e Costa's

film of that name. It struck a chord with the public and was one of the few local films to pack cinemas.

He stood as a presidential candidate for the far-left União Democrática Popular recently, lampooning other politicians while campaigning for social justice. His role as a free-thinker was emphasised further when he professed his homosexuality this year in solidarity with a candidate who had been smeared by his

opponents. President Jorge Sampaio visited Viegas just before he died. "Mario Viegas was a symbol of independence," he said, "who exercised his freedom of expression without infringing that of others. His death is a great loss to our artistic life."

Jill Joffe

Mario Viegas, actor, born November 10, 1948; died April 1, 1996

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FinanceGuardian

Lloyd's signs US ceasefire

Pauline Springett

LLOYD'S of London has struck a ceasefire deal with legal authorities in the US in an attempt to prevent its \$2.5 billion rescue package from collapsing under an onslaught of American litigation.

Under the deal, Lloyd's has agreed to stop pursuing its US Names for money to pay their losses, while some states have pledged to hold fire on plans to sue Lloyd's.

The ceasefire, which came into effect at midnight on Wednesday and lasts for one month, has come at a critical moment for Lloyd's. The embattled insurance market, which has recently lost around \$11 billion, has only a few weeks left to finalise its reconstruction package.

In early June, Lloyd's 34,000 Names will be told how much money they must pay to allow the company to be restructured. Lloyd's also hopes that later this summer the Department of Trade and Industry will give full authorisation to the company being set up to manage the market's old liabilities.

But in recent weeks the entire rescue project has looked in danger of disintegrating following a flurry of US lawsuits. US Names are alleging

that they should not have to pay their losses because they were lured into joining Lloyd's without being told the full nature of the financial risk.

The peace deal has so far been signed by nine states — Ohio, Arizona, Illinois, Missouri, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Colorado and Louisiana.

Lloyd's has also been talking to the State Securities Commissioners of around 25 more states and is hoping to persuade them to sign as well. Even if they do not, Lloyd's has put on hold for a month its entire programme of debt collection from US Names. It hopes by then to have "educated" the US authorities about Lloyd's. Its argument is that Lloyd's is not governed by US securities laws and so cannot be guilty of having broken them.

BT managers reject 'pay by performance'

Sources: Mline Labour Editor

BRTISH Telecom managers and supervisors yesterday delivered an 80 per cent vote for industrial action in protest against a performance pay system, which was described as "secretive and arbitrary" by union officials and has led to pay cuts in real terms for the majority over the past two years.

Members of the Society of Telecom Executives, to which about two thirds of BT's 20,000 junior and middle managers belong, voted by 6,782 to 1,693 in a 66 per cent turnout for action short of a strike. That would be likely to include working to contract on hours, job descriptions and procedures.

A meeting with BT management to resolve the dispute — described as potentially "serious and damaging" yesterday by Simon Petch, STS general secretary — has been hurriedly arranged for next week. Under trade union legislation, any action will have

to be taken by the end of the month. A company spokeswoman said BT was disappointed with the ballot result, because it believed its pay review was fair. She hoped the STS would "re-think" but that, in any case, there would be no impact on customers.

The review would add 4 per cent to BT's managers' wage bill and the increases would be in this month's pay packets. But the union said there was great anger among managers over the lack of openness about the criteria used in the pay review. This had been demonstrated by the vote of no confidence represented by the ballot result.

Some managers would receive nothing. "It will mean a wide range of increases starting well below the rate of inflation and members are not clear how these will be decided or who will get what," Mr Petch said. "Many simply do not trust the company to treat them fairly and resent a pay system shrouded in secrecy."

BT supervisors and middle managers earn between £18,000 and £35,000 a year, with the average around £25,000. The company has been trying to pull back the higher end of the range in line with a "benchmarking" exercise with comparable rates in industry.

But the STS argues that BT's performance-related pay system has been discredited because good performers are being penalised. Most managers received no pay rise in 1994 and two thirds got less than the rate of inflation last year. Morale has also been affected by BT's huge programme of job cuts, which has resulted in 100,000 redundancies in the past five years.



Borgias might recognise the state we're in

Larry Elliott Economics Editor

IT'S Europe in 2010. The grandiose Napoleonic dreams of a single political entity stretching from the Pyrenees to the Atlantic have been replaced by a patchwork of city states in which Machiavelli and the Borgias would feel at home.

Britain will be divided up into entities not seen since Anglo-Saxon times, with regional governments in Scotland, Wales, Manchester and London.

Forfeited? Not according to Noriko Hamai, a senior economist in the City who sees the Renaissance model of 500 years ago as a more viable blueprint for the future than the Delors plan for a single currency and ever closer political links.

In a study certain to delight Euro-sceptics, who have displayed all the ruthlessness of 15th Century Italy in their campaign against a federal Europe, Ms Hamai argues that there is no future in the notion of European Union.

Ms Hamai, who works for the Mitsubishi Research Institute, explained: "Monetary union is about to crash into a wall. There could be another currency crisis in the not too distant future, and even if monetary union does start on time there will be enormous

pressure both within and outside the single-currency area. "That will threaten devaluation wars between various parts of Europe and will destroy the whole idea of European Union."

Ms Hamai, who has lived in London for the past six years, said that there were already signs that Italy, Spain and Belgium could break up into regional blocks.

She believes that Brussels will become virtually impotent and that the city states she envisages will be joined together by an overarching body that wields only nominal power.

Ms Hamai's controversial view of Europe's future is developed in a BBC Radio programme — Beyond the Millennium — to be broadcast on April 15, and in a book, Dismantling Europe, to be published later this month.

She envisages that southern England might be called London in 15 years' time and that Greater Manchester could be the city state controlling northern England.

"I suppose [Europe] will look very much like Italy in the Renaissance period, with various city states, doing their own thing and competing with each other and being generally very creative, and really coming up with the wonderful things Europe was once able to generate," she says in the broadcast.

The Department of Trade has used its most draconian powers to close the UK's biggest ostrich farming organisation.

In a statement, the DTI announced that it had presented a petition for the winding up of the Ostrich Farming Corporation following a secret investigation under section 447 of the Companies Act.

The OFC — which claimed to have some 2,000 birds — was not answering its phones last night. It is not yet known how many "investors" have lost out as a result of the collapse or how much money has been lost by individuals who had been tempted to invest in ostriches.

The DTI refused to comment yesterday. City brokers — who have long warned against the highly speculative investment — fear that several thousand individuals may have lost millions of pounds in total.

It is thought that at its peak the OFC was taking some £2 million a month from would-be ostrich owners, who acted on claims that they would receive returns of more than 50 per cent a year for at least five years.

According to one ostrich farming source: "The Official Receiver would then step in because they have not paid livery money for the upkeep of the birds in Belgium."

Absolutely paperless, but Harvey Nicks float goes ahead



IT WAS "absolutely embarrassing" yesterday when Harvey Nichols, the top people's fashion store, launched its bid for stock market status — and the documentation failed to turn up, writes Sarah Whitebloom.

While the highly prestigious Harvey Nicks — much beloved of Princess Diana and the characters in

the TV show Absolutely Fabulous — was fully prepared to announce its public flotation terms, printing problems proved impossible to overcome.

In the event, the "pathfinder prospectus" was not just fashionably late but noticeably by its absence at its own launch party.

Despite this, Harvey Nichols, owned by the Hong Kong-based Dickson Concepts group, went ahead and announced the outline details. Its float price will be pitched at around 240p to 270p per share — valuing the group at £132 million to £148 million.

Joseph Wan, Harvey Nichols' chief executive, said yesterday the store's strategy includes expansion from its Knightsbridge base (above) to regional centres, starting with a store in Leeds. A prestige restaurants chain is also planned.

DTI buries biggest ostrich farmer

Inquiry makes dead meat of high-risk venture. Sarah Whitebloom reports

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The DTI statement said: "The company was incorporated in December 1994 and traded from Mansfield, selling ostriches as an investment opportunity. From July 1995 the company promised a financial return to its ostrich owners of over 50 per cent by guaranteeing a number of offspring per ostrich per year and agreeing to buy back those chicks at a year old for a predetermined price."

The organisation, which insisted that investors were bird "owners" rather than investors, operated from Nottinghamshire with huge farms based in Belgium.

Notebook

Woolwich needs to tell full story



Edited by Patrick Donovan

TWO crucial questions must be answered by the Woolwich Building Society about the sacking of its chief executive. If the society believes Peter Robinson behaved improperly over expense claims, why has the matter not been referred to the relevant authorities?

apposite. Choosing a habit that brings death a little closer, they get clobbered by the taxman along the way.

Yesterday saw the beginnings of a backlash against the level of tobacco tax, which accounts for £2.26 of a packet of cigarettes costing £2.88. The Fair Cigarette Tax Campaign — funded, oddly enough, by tobacco companies — has produced some frightening statistics.

Someone who buys a packet of cigarettes each day coughs up £790 a year in tax. For a worker earning £12,000 a year, this is almost as much as his or her total income tax bill, while a single unemployed person smoking a pack a day gives back a third of benefit via tobacco tax.

To be sure, chairman Sir Brian Jenkins took a brave decision to make the matter public in the first place. This is a controversy which has damaged the Woolwich's hard-won reputation.

It will also cause great disruption to the planned share flotation, over which Mr Robinson has overall control.

Having opened this Pandora's Box, the Woolwich cannot hope the matter will be settled quietly in a lawyer's office, even though it appears that Sir Brian is prepared to let the matter rest as long as Mr Robinson makes good the disputed money.

The former chief executive, meanwhile, denies any irregularity and is still claiming £300,000 compensation for a full year's salary plus the same pension entitlements for his 30 years of service.

Indeed, Mr Robinson was yesterday claiming through his lawyers that the Woolwich has never confronted him directly with the allegations.

The society's willingness to debate the matter privately is a mistake. This is, after all, an organisation with a strict policy of pressing charges against any employee suspected of improper behaviour — a correct stance.

Sir Brian's compromise approach sets a bad example to the rest of the workforce. It also lays the company open to charges of double standards: one law for the rank and file and another for his former boardroom cronies.

The second question the Woolwich needs to answer is why these allegations were uncovered only by a special internal audit preparing the society for its flotation. Why did its normal financial checks and security systems not pick up on a trail of unusual expense claims?

At the very least it seems that the Woolwich ran an excessively trusting regime, to the extent of allowing Mr Robinson to sign expenses without counter-authorisation.

Unless the Woolwich faces up to these issues, it may find the already painful path to conversion from mutualism that much more difficult.

Smoke screen

FOR Britain's 15 million smokers, Benjamin Franklin's view that the only certainties in life are death and taxes is specially

After years of trying, the whisky distillers squeezed a cut in duty from Chancellor Kenneth Clarke in last November's budget. Then, once a decent interval had elapsed, they restored prices to the previous level to boost profits.

Bristol & West denies plans for takeover by Australians

Margaret Hughes and Cliff Jones

BRISTOL & West was forced to deny yesterday that it was in talks with the National Australia Bank after speculation that Britain's ninth-largest building society was about to be taken over.

ling to expand its retail operations. It has accumulated 3 million customers through purchases of the Clydesdale, Northern and Yorkshire banks.

The society also said it was not poised to announce an agreed takeover by any other financial institution, nor a merger with another society.

Tim Clarke, banking analyst for stockbroker Panmure Gordon, said: "National Australia have wanted to expand into a full UK banking operation for a long time. The takeover would give them a good geographical base."

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GEC homes in on sonar venture with Thomson

Simon Beavis
Industrial Editor

THE pace of restructuring in the European defence industry accelerated yesterday as GEC announced plans to sink its airborne and underwater sonar business into a new £250 million joint venture company with Thomson of France.

The deal, hammered out after nearly a year of negotiation, is one of the biggest mergers to be announced on the European defence scene. It comes when talk of consolidation is increasingly urgent, not least with the emergence of a new breed of defence giants in the United States, where tie-up moves have been more successful.

The British and French Governments have yet to give their backing to the proposed deal, which would centre on a new company called Thomson Marconi Sonar, employing 3,500 workers and registered in the Netherlands.

Both governments immediately said they wished to scrutinise the deal at home on national security grounds, calling the European Commission to waive its right to look at mergers over a certain size. EU states have rights under European treaties to take responsibility for investigating mergers in areas where defence interests are concerned. The European Commission had no immediate comment.

In the new deal, GEC and Thomson are planning to bring together interests in Britain, France and Australia. British interests include Ferranti-Thomson sonar business taken over by Thomson CSF and GEC when Ferranti collapsed nearly two years ago.

The new company, which will be majority-owned by the French company with a 50.1 per cent stake, will have its industrial headquarters at Sophia-Antipolis in France. The two companies said that all existing commitments to suppliers and partners would be unaffected by the tie-up.

GEC has a good track record in forming international joint ventures, particularly in Europe.

Its largest are the 50/50 GEC Alsthom power engineering and train building alliance with Alcatel Alsthom, and a telecommunications joint venture led by Siemens of Germany.

It has also created Europe's biggest satellite business, with a 49 per cent stake in a joint venture with Matra of France.

But defence mergers in Europe have generally proved problematic, falling foul of conflicting national security interests, a mismatch between private and publicly owned companies, financial wrangles and an inability to agree which partners should shoulder rationalisation.

British Aerospace has tried in vain for three years to tie up a merger of its Dynamics missile business with Matra.

Lazard houses to share profits

Roger Cowie

THE three Lazard merchant bank houses in London, New York and Paris are to move closer together, although retaining separate identities and independence.

They are creating a new system of inter-firm profit sharing, to enable each house to share in the combined financial performance while preserving their separate cultures.

Through a pooling system, the partners and managing directors of each bank will share in the income of all three and therefore have an interest in the financial performance of the Lazard Houses as a group.

Income will still be produced and primarily paid within each firm, but the 103 partners will now also receive approximately one-third of their pay from the pool. The pay structure for each of Lazard's 2,000 employees world-

wide will not change. The plan will be implemented at the end of this year subject to the necessary approvals.

Michel David-Weill, chairman of Lazard Frères in New York and of London-based Lazard Partners, said: "Our purpose is to make the most of who we are, without jeopardising what makes each of us unique."

Lazard directors Michel David-Weill, Jean-Claude Haas and David Verey are also directors of the entertainment and publishing group Pearson, which has a 50 per cent interest in the London firm, Lazard Partners. The plan therefore requires the approval of the ordinary shareholders of Pearson.

The three Lazard houses were first formally linked together in 1984. Since then, they have worked together increasingly. Last year, the three houses worked together on more than 20 transactions, including the Glaxo-Wellcome merger.

High prices blamed as car sales slump

Zoe Eisenstein

THE row over the high price of new cars in the United Kingdom erupted again yesterday as figures from the motor industry showed that sales unexpectedly fell back in March.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders said 180,275 new cars were sold, almost 1 per cent down on the same month last year.

The SMMT said that although sales to businesses and car fleets rose by 10.4 per cent, sales to individual buyers were down by 6.6 per cent. Economists expressed surprise that the car market was lagging when consumer confidence appeared to be growing and the housing market showed signs of recovery.

Ten Shepherson, UK economist at HSBC Greenwell, said: "The problem with new cars is almost certainly that they are too expensive." He said that prices had risen by 4 per cent over the last year and warned that overall sales would continue to struggle during 1996.

Roger King, an SMMT director, said accusations about UK prices were misleading. "They have done nothing to build consumer confidence, which can only be encouraged by manufacturers and retailers working together."

The Retail Motor Industry Federation, for car dealers, said the industry had yet to convince buyers that cars were "exceptional value".

Tourist traffic on Le Shuttle rises by 31pc in one month

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

EUROTUNNEL yesterday announced that tourist traffic on its Le Shuttle service showed a 31 per cent monthly increase in March.

Georges-Christian Chazot, Eurotunnel's group managing director, said the figures were "proof of the growing strength of Le Shuttle in the cross-Channel market".

Last Saturday, the service carried a record 8,430 vehicles, including 586 coaches. Nearly 50,000 people used the service.

In March 152,875 vehicles used Le Shuttle, compared with 72,618 a year earlier. The number of Eurostar trains increased over that period from 506 to 1,116, and freight trains from 433 to 623.

The CBI said yesterday that this Easter weekend's traffic jams would highlight yet again the failure of Britain's transport policy. It called on the Government to spend an extra £2 billion a year on the transport infrastructure.

Robert Napier, chairman of its transport committee, said the Government should begin looking at ways of improving the tax and pricing structure for transport. Delays in several transport schemes had undermined businesses' belief that the Government had a clear strategy, he said.



Rainbow warriors... The angling season started at Bawl Water reservoir, Kent, with the release of 9,000 rainbow trout from breeding cages. A thousand anglers a day are expected over Easter, after 500 turned up on Wednesday, the opening day. Southern Water filled the reservoir from a new £18 million pumping station. PHOTOGRAPH BY STEWART GOLDSTEIN

Swan staff win £6m payout

Martin Wainwright

THREE years of hard bargaining by union negotiators, and a window of opportunity in law, have won nearly £6 million compensation for shipbuilding workers who lost their jobs with the collapse of Swan Hunter's Tyneside yards.

The payments to 2,500 former employees, including up to 1,000 re-hired by the new Swan company — mark the second big cash boost this week to North-east households, with the Northern

Rock building society's announcement of plans to convert into a bank and issue bonus shares averaging £1,000.

Meanwhile, a second compensation claim for senior Swan staff, estimated at £4 million, is expected to be settled out of court.

The first agreement is the largest to date under a brief legal interregnum, ushered in by the 1993 Paramount Airways ruling which held receivers liable for employment contracts if they kept staff on for more than 14 days after taking over collapsed firms.

The law was then changed in March 1994 to block this on the grounds that companies would not be kept running as going concerns if receivers feared expensive liabilities over employment rights.

"The Paramount judgment had not been reached when we took over Swan's," said Gordon Horsfield of Swan's receivers, Price Waterhouse, yesterday.

"And if we had known about it, I think that we would have moved to close the yard immediately. That would have meant the loss of some £40 million in pay during the time that we operated

the business in receivership to complete a number of contracts."

Leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions — who have negotiated with Price Waterhouse since 1993 — did not try to hide their real satisfaction with the final £5.8 million package.

"It is a great success and we're especially pleased that this has been achieved through negotiation, not litigation, which would have cost both sides money," said Tom Brennan, the confederation's regional chairman. "But remember that this is

only what the workers were entitled to in their employment contracts. It should not be seen as a windfall."

The payments average £2,500 a head, but differing lengths of service mean that nearly one-third of the former staff will get only about £500. A small number of managers receive up to £15,000. Overall, the deal requires agreement by 95 per cent of the former workforce before the end of this month.

Alice Grosvenor, of the Manufacturing Science and Finance union national executive, said: "The overall figure may sound like Lottery

money, but when it is split between all these households, it becomes more down to earth. It's only what they financially and morally deserve."

However, Davey Hall, president of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, regretted the way in which the deal topped the sum needed to keep Swan's afloat immediately before receivership.

He said: "We'd much rather have maintained employment with all the lads and lasses in constructive jobs. It's actually cost more to close Swan Hunter than it would have done to save it."

News in brief

Reckitt disposes of unit for £82m

RECKITT & Colman raised £82 million yesterday through the sale of its US Personal Products division, which makes brands sold mainly in the US, such as Chubbs baby wipes. The buyer is JW Childs Associates, a Massachusetts-based investment management firm.

Reckitt, which first announced plans to shed the unit last year, will use the cash to reduce debts. It intends to concentrate on its core household products.

It said the division being sold generated a trading profit of \$10 million last year on turnover of \$110 million, and had net assets of \$30 million at the end of 1995. — Tony May

McAlpine shrugs off loss

THE Alfred McAlpine construction group was yesterday optimistic that its fortunes would improve after announcing a plunge into losses of £24.5 million for 1995. This was after making exceptional charges of £24.7 million and follows a profit of £10.7 million in the previous 14 months.

The board said it was better placed to succeed in its present and future markets because it was concentrating on its core skills in the UK, and improving its US and slate businesses. The company said house prices were now affordable, although consumer confidence was still shaky, and that there would be a modest improvement in 1996.

In January, the group announced a reorganisation of its construction activities, including the closure of its traditional operator building business. — Tony May

Cadbury's sweet tooth

CADBURY'S Trebor Basset sweets business has added brands including Keiller, Barker & Dobson and Butterkist popcorn to its collection with the purchase of Craven and Keiller from the privately owned Portfolio Foods. The company had sales last year of £42 million and net assets of £12 million.

Barker & Dobson was once a public company in its own right, which bought the Dundee-based Keiller marmalade and sweets business in 1985. It then acquired the Budegens supermarket chain and decided to concentrate on retailing, selling its sweets interests in 1988. The deal reunites the brands with Hacks and Victory V, which Cadbury bought in 1990. — Roger Cowie

SFA expels trader

A FORMER trader at Credit Suisse First Boston has been expelled by the Securities & Futures Authority, the main industry regulator, after he admitted concealing a position from a client and the bank. David Santangelo, a former salesman in the bank's fixed income division, was also fined £25,000 and made to pay £8,000 costs. The SFA said Mr Santangelo had "deliberately procured" a client to buy securities, at a price he knew to be too high, in order to cover a loss-making position.

In addition, the SFA said Mr Santangelo had deceived the client and the bank as to the nature of the deals by using an intermediary, and had deliberately given the client a false valuation of replacement securities.

CSFB has dismissed Mr Santangelo and reimbursed the client for "considerable losses". — Ian King

Hornby row rumbles on

HORNBY, the model trains and toys group, is still arguing over compensation terms with Keith Ness, the former chief executive who left in October. It is understood he had a three-year rolling contract worth £125,000, which would entitle him to a payment of more than £380,000.

The group said yesterday that Mr Ness's theoretical maximum entitlement was "substantial" but that after taking legal advice it believed he was unlikely to receive all he claimed and expected him to settle at a lower figure.

The group, which is now concentrating on core activities, lost £3.8 million in the six months to December 31, but after adding increased interest charges this rose to £4.3 million before tax, against a profit of £11.1 million a year earlier. The main problem was the need to write off £4 million against the sale of its Fletcher boats subsidiary for £315,000. — Tony May

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صكرا من الامل



Anxious moments... the Newcastle United bench, with Kevin Keegan, left, and Terry McDermott, centre, show the strain during the see-saw epic at Anfield on Wednesday night

PHOTOGRAPH JOHN BARR

Was this epic the game of the decade?

David Lacey on the breathtaking Liverpool-Newcastle match that created a lifetime memory for those privileged to watch it

HAD Liverpool and Newcastle United been in the business of winning Oscars the award for best screenplay would now be theirs for the sharing following Wednesday's excitement at Anfield.

In Newcastle's case this was an epic waiting to happen, there had been 3-3 replays at Wimbledon and Manchester City and, as with many epics, it was necessary to suspend rational thought fully to enjoy the experience.

The reality is that Newcastle's 4-3 defeat by Liverpool, for whom Stan Collymore scored the winning goal in heart-stopping time, was their fourth loss in six Premier League matches which have gained them only four points.

As a result Manchester United will go into the Easter programme three points ahead at the top, having now played only one game more than Kevin Keegan's team.

No wonder the bookmakers now make Alex Ferguson's United odds-on favourites to bring the league title to Old Trafford for the third time in four seasons, while Newcastle have drifted to 2-1 against

And this side that had nearly closed the books by the third week in January, when they were 12 points ahead.

Keegan's players could be six behind by the time they face Blackburn on Monday night. For, even if they beat QPR at home tomorrow, and assuming Manchester United do not slip up against City at Maine Road, the leaders can still steal a march on their flagging pursuers when Coventry visit Old Trafford on Monday. Liverpool are still a couple of footfalls further back.

These thoughts were clear enough as a brilliant morning dawned over the North-west yesterday. The previous

night, however, it was hard to think logically after a match which drained every emotion except that of exultation that English football could put on such a breathtaking spectacle without, apparently, feeling the need to draw breath itself.

Crucial to the entertainment was the mutual desire by Liverpool and Newcastle to play attacking football regardless of risk and in Liverpool's case especially, the quality of their finishing. The two goals apiece scored by Collymore and Robbie Fowler were striking examples of the striker's art. Yet the game would not have raised Anfield to such feverish heights of excitement had the defending of

both sides not been so manifestly inept.

Newcastle appeared to have adopted the defensive principles laid down in Never-Never Land: if you look back at the enemy through your legs they will take fright and run away. To concede one goal by allowing a low centre to beat the entire defence was careless enough; to concede a second in like manner was criminally negligent.

On the night, however, this seemed a mere detail, like the dreadful foul on Steve McManaman which might have seen David Batty sent off or when John Barnes got away with a half-push-half-trip which brought down Faustino Asprilla in the Liverpool penalty area.

This match has joined that narrow band of games always quoted as examples of what

football as an entertainment should be. Multi-move attacking might have been met by Movietone News defending but nobody who was at Anfield on Wednesday will ever forget the pleasurable pounding of the senses that these teams provided.

If Keegan glanced up on his way home he might have spotted a lunar eclipse. Certainly Newcastle's first championship for 69 years is now in imminent danger of being blotted out by a red shadow.

Ferguson knows his team need only keep winning to regain the title.

But will they? The next three of their remaining six fixtures are against teams desperate for points — Manchester City, Coventry and Southampton. Keegan's immediate problem is the season and, although the club forced Steve Howey off and could keep him out for the rest of the season.

With Southgate, Adams and Pallister already nursing injuries, the watching Terry Venables did not need another England centre-back to go home. However, the performances of McManaman and Robert Lee more than compensated for this. It was, all in all, an outstanding night not merely for English football but for English footballers.

Lacey's Super Six

WEDNESDAY'S match at Anfield compares with the most exciting in the game's history. Apart from the 1953 Matthews Cup final, almost a cliché now, half-a-dozen others of like character and plot spring to mind.

January 10, 1948
FA Cup, third round: Aston Villa 4, Manchester United 6. A crowd of 65,000 saw Aston Villa go ahead through Edwards after 13 seconds. By half-time, however, Rowley, Morris, Pearson, Morris again and Delaney had given United a 5-1 lead. Edwards, Smith and Dorsett then brought Villa back to 5-4, only for Pearson to add a sixth for United.

February 1, 1958
First Division: Arsenal 4, Manchester United 5. This game will always be remembered as the Busby Babes' valiant defence. Within a week half the team had perished in the Munich air crash. Leading 3-0 at half-time, United conceded three goals in less than three minutes in the second half, only to score twice more before Arsenal found the net again.



Davies... shook Spurs

June 17, 1970
World Cup semi-finals: Italy 4, West Germany 3. For the most part this was a tight-knit affair, with the Germans struggling to draw level after Boninsegna's early goal. Then Schnellinger scored in the 89th minute and defending was forgotten in extra time as another five goals were freely exchanged. Rivera getting the winner.

February 7, 1973
FA Cup fourth-round replay: Tottenham Hotspur 3, Derby County 5.

Always remembered as Roger Davies' greatest game, this tie seemed all over when Spurs, who had drawn 1-1 at the Baseball Ground, led 3-1 with less than 10 minutes remaining. Then Hector and Davies brought the scores level, the latter completing a hat-trick in extra-time.

February 20, 1991
FA Cup fifth-round replay: Everton 4, Liverpool 4. After a scoreless draw at Anfield the teams let it all hang out at Goodison. Cofie thwarted Liverpool with a goal at the end of normal time and another late in extra-time. Two days later a stressed-out Kenny Dalglish resigned as Liverpool manager. And Everton won the second replay.

January 4, 1994
Premier League: Liverpool 3, Manchester United 3. A match notable for United's start and Liverpool's recovery. By the 24th minute Bruce, Giggs and Irwin had given United a 3-0 lead but by half-time Clough had responded with two for Liverpool. Ruddock scored their third 11 minutes from the end.

THE FINAL RUN-IN

Manchester Utd

Apr 6 Man City away
Apr 8 Coventry home
Apr 13 Southampton away
Apr 17 Leeds home
Apr 27 Nottm Forest home
May 1 Middlesbrough away

Newcastle Utd

Apr 6 QPR home
Apr 8 Blackburn away
Apr 14 Aston Villa home
Apr 17 Southampton home
Apr 27 Leeds away
May 1 Nottm Forest away
May 5 Tottenham home

Liverpool

Apr 6 Coventry away
Apr 8 West Ham home
Apr 16 Everton away
Apr 27 Middlesbrough home
May 1 Arsenal away
May 5 Man City away

Poached Brown could cost United dear

MANCHESTER UNITED may have to pay Oldham more than £500,000 if their controversial schoolboy signing, David Brown, plays for England.

A Football League commission ruled yesterday that United must pay Oldham £75,000 for Brown following a FA decision upheld on appeal, that they had broken the rules when they signed him.

United must also pay a further £225,000 if Brown, who is the leading scorer in United's B team, makes five first-team appearances, followed by £100,000 after 25 appearances and similar payments after 50 and 75 appearances.

Another £25,000 is due from United if Brown is capped at England Under-21 level, and £100,000 if he appears in a senior international game.

Some England fans have the chance to give Terry Venables' team a cut-price send-off to the European Championship finals. Any of the FA's 6,000-strong Travel Club buying a seat for the Wembley friendly on April 24 against Croatia can watch next month's game with Hungary at half price.

Match tickets are priced from £13 to £30 with the Olympic Gallery at £40-£45. That means it could cost someone less than £20 to watch both internationals.

Manchester United's Alex Ferguson has given Brown the Manager's of the Month award for March, while United's Eric Cantona has taken the player's monthly prize.

Dave Bassett was rewarded for steering Crystal Palace into the promotion reckoning after eight unbeaten games with the Endleigh First Division manager's prize for March.

Blackpool's Sam Allardyce took the Second Division award and Stan Ternent of Bury the Third Division's.

Gravy train prepares to pick up steam

Martin Thorpe reports that the cost of relegation from the Premiership is high and from next year should get higher

HERE is the Premiership forecast for the next five years from one club's managing director: "With the substantial increase expected in the next television deal, the continuing influx of talented foreign players, all the revamped stadiums and, this season, the European Championship, the profile of soccer in this country is due for a dramatic hike."

"It will make soccer a very, very attractive proposition for increased sponsorship and other commercial investment and I believe we are for a heavy five years, with the graph pointing decidedly upwards."

With predictions of that

sort it is no wonder that clubs at the bottom of the table are anxious not to get thrown out of the gravy train. Especially the author of the above quote — Colin Barlow of Manchester City, one of the clubs hanging on for dear life.

Barlow's answer to the question of how City will cope with relegation is familiarly dangerous: "I haven't contemplated that because I think we are too good to go down."

The First Division is littered with clubs who thought the same. Of course they were not brought to their knees by relegation, though Swindon can testify to the pervasive pull of the downward spiral. Clubs simply adjust to their

new life and get on with it, dreaming of a quick return to the land of milk and money.

But loss of status, as in all walks of life, does have its repercussions.

The cost of relegation depends on the continuing loyalty of a club's fans and sponsors and the success of the team on the field. But a rough estimate puts it anywhere between £1 million and £4 million.

Life at the top is increasingly lucrative. Each Premiership club receives a basic £878,725 at the start of each season. The Sky television deal plus £77,725 every time they appear live — which on average is three times. The next deal, starting the season after next, could easily double that figure.

On top of that each club receives £77,725 every time they appear on BBC highlights and another £50,000 per season each from the pool of

television income earned from Premiership games shown abroad.

Then there are the merit awards, which also come out of the television money. This season the Premiership's bottom club will receive £48,165, the next club twice that, the next three times that and so on up to the champions, who receive £283,300.

Gate receipts, too, are higher in the Premiership. Bolton's average attendances have risen from 13,500 in the First Division last season to 19,000 in the Premiership this season and, although the club increased their best-ticket price only, from £11 to £15, they stand to make an extra £1 million on admissions — plus an extra £30,000 from programme sales.

Then there will also affect merchandising and lottery income and sponsorship deals, especially shirt contracts, which usually contain a

clause saying that the sponsor pays less if the team goes down.

But there is a safety net for relegated clubs. The Premiership pays £430,000 to each club for two seasons after they drop. And the new Sky television deal with the Football League from next season will mean the First Division champions £800,000 down to the bottom club's £63,000, with each club pocketing an extra £50,000 each time they appear live.

Relegation also brings a reduction in costs for such items as some players' salaries and police charges. Bolton calculated that promotion last season cost them an extra £800,000 in this area.

If things become really bad, relegated clubs can, of course, sell their best players. Though that can jeopardise quick return to the Premiership, which at the bottom line remains the place to be.

Rugby League

Super League: London 38, Paris 22

Parisians left behind by Broncos' gallop to the top

Ian Mailes

THE game was billed as the tale of two cities and the men from London now have Great Expectations. After their win at Halifax and this exhilarating victory at The Valley they are the early leaders of the Super League. Even the crowd of 9,338 exceeded expectations.

The pre-match entertainment included songs from the local boys, Squeeze, and fireworks by the players' tunnel.

There were plenty of pyrotechnics on the pitch too. Broncos survived the loss of their prop Gavin Allen, who left the field with a broken left arm in the second minute, and ran in seven tries.

Barwick, Tollett and Carroll were elusive runners behind the scrum and with the game a quarter old the Paris defence was breached for the first time. Allen's replacement, Mestrov, gave Meyer the opportunity to break Lucchese's tackle for the first try in the left-hand corner.

A penalty by Torettes kept the scoreboard moving before the Broncos' stand-off Duncan McRae, with a neat side-step and a swerving 25-yard run, stretched the Broncos' lead.

Excellent passing by the French backs gave Cervo the opportunity to stretch his legs with a try in the opposite corner before Tollett touched down to give the Broncos a handy 16-6 interval lead.

After the break the Australian Ian Turner and Bonatti brought Paris back into the game, with McRae's strength and determination helping and a second score close to the post.

A brilliant piece of individual play by Broncos' scrum-half Leo Dynevor, with 13 minutes left, settled the issue. Twenty yards from the Paris line he clipped the ball skywards and it set up perfectly for him to gather and dive over.

The crowd's favourite junior, Paul, a former Rugby Union player from Bexleyheath close by, won the loud cheer of the evening for Broncos' sixth try two minutes later.

The French replacement Ramondo and the impressive Tollett, with his second score and Broncos' seventh try, exchanged scores in the final two minutes. Dynevor took over kicking duty and landed the last conversion and it was Bonsoir Paris.

It was almost a perfect night for the Broncos but Allen was followed into the medical room by Barwick, who pulled a hamstring in a dash to the visitors' line.

London Broncos: Barwick, Paul, Moyer, Tollett, Carroll, McRae, Dynevor, Bowden, Lee, Allen, Shaw, Pitt, Malterson, Substantian, Mestrov, Bryan, Keating, Kent.

Paris St Germain: Luchman, Bonatti, Turner, Charnon, Cervo, Brown, Olat, Kocila, Torettes, Ushakov, Adams, Cabanary, Poch, Maltstrom, Duvouchi, Ramondo, Courty, Cervo, Mestrov, D Campbell (Widnes).

Results

Soccer

PORTUGAL LEAGUE: First Division: Bloemfontein 2, Derby 2.

Rugby Union

ENGLAND: Bath 24, Glasgow 21.

Rugby League

STONKS SUPER LEAGUE: London 38, Paris 22.

Baseball

ENGLISH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP: Northampton 2, Derby 1.

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Basketball

NBA: Cleveland 105, LA Lakers 81; Detroit 98, Charlotte 85; New Jersey 100, LA Clippers 84; Philadelphia 97, Indiana 102; New York 88, Orlando 88; San Antonio 117, Sacramento 96; Seattle 118, Houston 105; Vancouver 103, Minnesota 103.

Ice Hockey

NHL: Buffalo 1, Washington 3; Montreal 1, Boston 4; Ottawa 3, Florida 2; Tampa Bay 4, Hartford 2; Toronto 2, Chicago 5; Winnipeg 3, Dallas 1; Colorado 3, St Louis 1; Calgary 4, Vancouver 3; Anaheim 1, Edmonton 0; Los Angeles 2, Detroit 2 (OT).

Snooker

BRITISH OPEN (Plymouth): Second round: S Lee (Eng) 5-2, M Hallett (Eng) 5-2; A Huddleson (Scott) 5-2, J James (Eng) 5-2; P Ebdon (Eng) 5-2, D Taylor (NI) 5-2; J Hughes (Wales) 5-2, J Fothergill (NI) 5-2; J Williams (Wales) 5-2, N Poulton (Eng) 5-2; S Hendry (Scott) 5-2, J Beal (NI) 5-2.

Squash

BRITISH OPEN (Cardiff): Second round: S Lee (Eng) 5-2, M Hallett (Eng) 5-2; A Huddleson (Scott) 5-2, J James (Eng) 5-2; P Ebdon (Eng) 5-2, D Taylor (NI) 5-2; J Hughes (Wales) 5-2, J Fothergill (NI) 5-2; J Williams (Wales) 5-2, N Poulton (Eng) 5-2; S Hendry (Scott) 5-2, J Beal (NI) 5-2.

Table Tennis

ENGLISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP (Kettering): Qualifying groups, second round: S Lee (Eng) 5-2, M Hallett (Eng) 5-2; A Huddleson (Scott) 5-2, J James (Eng) 5-2; P Ebdon (Eng) 5-2, D Taylor (NI) 5-2; J Hughes (Wales) 5-2, J Fothergill (NI) 5-2; J Williams (Wales) 5-2, N Poulton (Eng) 5-2; S Hendry (Scott) 5-2, J Beal (NI) 5-2.

Rugby Union

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Rugby League

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Fixtures

(7.30 unless stated)

Soccer

FA CUP: First Round: Middlebury v Sheffield Wed (5.45).

Rugby Union

ENGLISH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP: Northampton 2, Derby 1.

Rugby League

STONKS SUPER LEAGUE: London 38, Paris 22.

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Sport in brief

Cricket

Nine now in race for selectors' jobs

Don Best

GEOFF MILLER and Chris Cowdrey slipped in at the last minute to join the scramble to become England selectors as the nine-man field was described as "potentially embarrassing" by Tony

Baker, chief executive of Hampshire — the county that nominated Miller. After confirming the former Derbyshire and England all-rounder as their choice, Baker, a member of the Test and County Cricket Board's executive committee, said: "It could be an embarrassing election as I don't think the

first-past-the-post system is ideal when there are nine candidates. I am not criticising but it might have been better to have had a two-tier system for reaching the final two selections." Kent picked Cowdrey, their former captain, before Lord's stipulated midnight on April 17 as the deadline for the postal ballot which will produce the

men to join Raymond Iltingworth, David Lloyd and Mike Atherton on the selection committee. The full list of nominations, released yesterday, is Ian Botham, David Gaveney, Fred Titmus, Brian Bolus, John Edrich, Kim Barnett, Graham Gooch, Miller and Cowdrey.

Questions still remain about Botham's media commitments, Gooch and Barnett's playing duties and Gaveney's opposition to Iltingworth in last month's abortive chairman-of-selectors contest. But the counties now have nearly a fortnight to consider logically who would be best suited to selectors' duties.

Lord's stressed yesterday that a circular to counties sent out by the TCCB chief executive Alan Smith had been designed to give guidance rather than to comment unfavourably on Botham's potential clash of interests. "Alan was certainly not trying to put the block on anyone," said the TCCB's Richard Little.

Golf

Monty short again but still sub-par

David Davies in Atlanta

COLIN Montgomerie produced his ninth successive sub-par round of the season when, in the BellSouth Classic at the Atlanta Country Club yesterday, he got round in 71, one under. Montgomerie, pleased but not ecstatic, said: "That's safe. Nothing untoward."

It left him seven shots behind the early leaders Jim Gallagher Jr and John Wilton, who had rounds of 66, while the left-hander Russ Cochran chipped in for an eagle at the last for a 67.

Cochran's playing partner Sandy Lyle could only look on enviously as the American holed out. Lyle had two putts, practically every green and, as his watching wife Jolande said: "You can't make cuts, let alone win tournaments, if you're taking 33 puts per round."

Lyle had, in fact, hit the green at the long 18th with a drive and four-iron and took his usual two putts for what was his only birdie in a round of 73. "I think I'm working too hard," he said. "I've been putting in five or six hours a day trying to make a couple of things automatic and I've not given my muscles time to relax. I'm all stiff and my hands are sore."

Lyle has played six events in the US this year, finished in the top 20 in three and missed the cut in the other three. He is in dire danger of missing the short one for, as he said: "You've got to come out of the chute quickly and then keep firing. You can't ease your way into a tournament over here."

Montgomerie had a great many chances to be even more under but put himself under his putting let him down. Over the last 36 holes of last weekend's Players Championship he had a bet with his coach Bill Ferguson that, for every putt he left short, he would pay out \$5. He ended up in profit for, although he left one putt short,

he holed a chip for an eagle which cost Ferguson \$10.

The bet was not operative yesterday, a fact that Ferguson rued at the end of a round in which Montgomerie had left no fewer than eight putts short. "The greens are a bit grainy," the Scot said, "and I couldn't get the pace of them when putting into the grain. We'll have to have the bet again for the first round of the Masters [next week] just to make sure I get up to the hole."

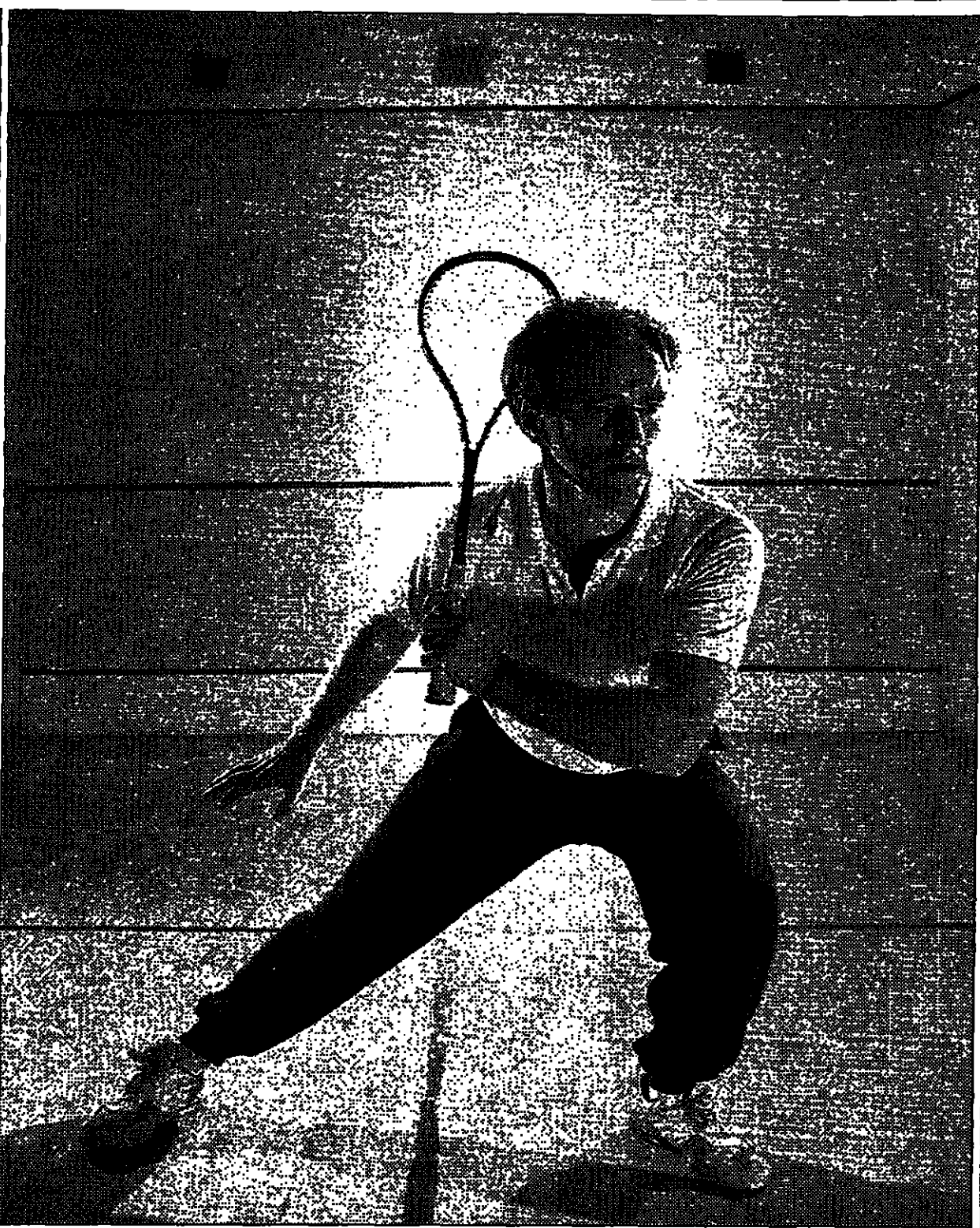
It cannot have helped that one of his playing partners was Don Pooley, a US Tour veteran who has a putting stroke that should cause him to be called P.P.P. Pooley. It stuttered back slowly and spasmodically before making a fairly unconvincing pass at the ball. It is not a soothing sight and after a while Montgomerie began to study his own feet whenever the American was putting.

Having started at the 10th, the Scot hit an excellent shot into the 18th to go one under and his round looked as if it might take off when he at last holed a putt, at the 5th, from 20 feet. But at the short 6th all three players underestimated the wind that funnels down a tree-lined valley, took two more club and finished through the green. Montgomerie was in a bunker, came out to six feet and failed again to hit the putt hard enough.

The last three holes are all birdie chances for tournament players but at each of them Montgomerie left a birdie putt short, an exasperating failing after hitting a series of good shots.

Ian Woosnam's 72 looked like being much lower when he started with birdies at the 2nd and 4th. But he missed a birdie putt at the 8th and two holes later his drive finished in the face of a fairway bunker. His recovery plugged in another bunker and that meant a double-bogey six and the momentum was lost.

"I keep getting stuck on 72 these days," he said ruefully. "I know that will not help him much next week."



The inner game... Mike Hall demonstrates a meditative movement of Tai Chi with racket

The Tao of the killer boast

Erleend Clouston, seeker of backhand truth, goes on court and falls at the feet of Britain's first New Age squash guru, Mike Hall

IT DID seem very effective, this new approach. Mike Hall's shiny tracksuit bottoms bounded around the court like a pair of indestructible undergarments as he sniped the ball effortlessly up against the back wall.

"Are you feeling tired?" he inquired politely. The answer, privately, was yes. Hall, playwright, mystic and professional squash guru with the possible answer to Britain's sporting problems, is a daunting opponent on many levels. It would not do, however, to admit inadequacy.

What was it Hall had murmured in the cafe before-hand? "The biggest route into the unconscious is observing body movement." If he was so adept at psychic sleuthing, let him work out his opponent's condition for himself. The Aubergine Man continued to spray the ball about laconically. He seemed to have gelatine hips, revolving them this way and that like a demented Hawaiian. "Our centres of gravity are too high," he continued, gracefully pocketing out into a fearsome overhead smash. "One of the reasons Jonah Barrington

was a great player was that he had a low centre of gravity." This is the core of Hall's thesis. British sports stars, he argues, overdevelop their upper bodies at the expense of inner suppleness. Put crudely, our leading lights topple over too easily. The slippery Hall, in contrast, is positively buoyant.

"In theory there should be movement and stillness at the same time," he intoned from the back of the court, cracking away another winner.

Hall, a 39-year-old Scouser, is Britain's first New Age squash coach. As part of the process of helping people improve their game, he tries to understand their minds. At £10 per 40-minute session — Hall reckons six are needed — one may become a better player and a better human. "Take Kate," Hall had said as she slipped a pre-match juice. "She had problems with her authoritarian dad. She wanted me to teach her everything. Now I could pick up on that and got her to increase her self-esteem." Hall got her to come on court and consider "the restrictions she had created and those that had been created for her".

This is heavy stuff for a squash coach, even one from Liverpool. Hall, it will come as no surprise to learn, has written (and had performed) two plays about social inadequacy and believes physical problems stem from emotional upsets which can translate into cancerous outbursts in the body's endocrine system. His Edinburgh-based company 4D Sports introduces, it claims, "the inner Tao of squash".

The guru continued: "What we have come to understand is that people who apply for lessons bring with them more than a decision to be better squash players. For me to improve their game I knew I had to address the whole aspect of the individual."

One squash pupil turned out to have been attacked by his mother with a knife. "He had so much fear in his body he could hardly move on court," Hall explained.

To unravel the bundles of neuroses who present themselves for his clinics at Marco's Leisure Centre in central Edinburgh, Hall has enlisted the 800-year-old Chinese discipline of Tai Chi. Resembling slow-motion shadow-boxing,

this relies heavily on the practitioner sinking deeply into his or her pelvic area. In theory the body ceases to be compartmentalised into chest, waist and legs; instead one becomes a sinuous human hosepipe, a perfectly poised athletic weapon.

There are 108 separate movements specially geared for the Western physique," Hall said, rattling off some potential sporting applications. For example, England fast bowlers, propelled by inner flexibility rather than rigid strength, should be able to deliver 50 per cent quicker.

Players of contact sports are warned by this former Liverpool Schools Under-15 midfielder: "The more rigid you are, the nearer death you are. When I am hit hard in a tackle, the pain goes straight through me, like a lightning conductor."

On court the pain was all going one way as those aubergine legs swayed this way and that. "You can sit in front of a therapist and hide. I am able to see what is going on inside people's minds by observing their movement patterns," Hall had declared.

Afterwards he analysed my game for me in terms of yang, the active principle, and yin, the passive. "Your backhand," he declared, "was definitely yin."

Sixth column

THE changes in the Olympic athletics programme to accommodate Michael Johnson mean that all Britain's golden eggs may be laid on the same day. The men's triple jump final (Jonathan Edwards) is now on Saturday July 27, the same day as the finals of the 4,000m pursuit (Graeme Obree), the coxless pairs (Redgrave/Pinsent) and four, the women's canoe slalom (Lynn Simpson, world champion) and, for what it is worth, the men's 100m.

There may be fun the day before too, on the softball court. China play Chinese Taipei.

TODAY'S fixtures include Kampala v London Irish. The Exiles, who play a Uganda XV on Monday, are the first European rugby team to visit the country in a quarter-century. Delicate touring teams nowadays take their own food, if not cheer. The Irish took wagon-wheels — 20 crates of them. But their image is unbroken. The biscuits were for children.

There was other bounty in old boots, jerseys and shorts. Post-Amin the game struggles for want of funds and equipment. The Irish raised three dozen sacks.

SIR JOHN HALL, having discovered what the ice hockey event was that his Durham Wasps had reached at the last weekend, thought it worthy of his attendance. He arrived and found the 16 front-row seats. Offered four, he settled for some elsewhere.

It was an ill-starred visit. The Wasps lost their semi-final to Nottingham Panthers. Behind him were supporters of the Durham City Wasps, a club born out of the ashes of Sir John's expropriation. They did not miss the chance to express their sense of betrayal.

SQUASH got on the Internet in time for this week's British Championships. The Squash Racquets Association was known to be planning its own site and as word spread, one surfer tried SRA for the hourly update of results. He knew the game was masochistic but not quite satanic ritual abuse.

AS Oxford's stroke for the Boat Race tomorrow Adam Frost is used to setting the pace. On Wednesday evening, traditionally the coaches' dining-in night at the Dark Blues' headquarters in Barnes, he was setting it in the kitchen too. Between rowing at Eton and PPE at Oriel he cooked his way to a Cordons Bleu in Paris.

The company of 25 were treated to salmon en route with a haddock and water.



Edwards... day of destiny

cross mousseline in tarragon and white wine sauce with new potatoes and julienne of carrots and celery, followed by cheese and tiramisu. This fitted the stipulated carbohydrate count. Subsidised steaks from Dewhurst are distant history.

Despite his initials, Adam Richard Ayler Frost denies he was born with an oen in his mouth. "Perhaps a wooden spoon," he says.

WIGAN's first Challenge Cup defeat in nine seasons has undermined their air of impregnability — unless their summons of a psychic with tarot cards on Wednesday was a Super League gimmick. Stephanie Justice, aged 21, saw "strength, solidity, power and celebration" in their past. She comes from Wigan. In the present she saw victory and glory but warned against over-confidence. In the future she ventured no further than today: Wigan will beat St Helens 24-17.

The club's marketing manager David Bradshaw said they hoped she might be able to forewarn them of "injuries or opposition tactics". And arrests?

FROM Canford School in Dorset to the Sun Court Hotel in Fife is more than 1,000 miles. Each has a real tennis court and there are 18 tennis courts in the area. Next week Semmence and Bobby Pugh intend to play a set on all 20 in 33 hours, setting a record inside the 34 hours 28 minutes when there were only 18. They cannot afford to run behind. Time or forget the court-door codes. They are sneaking into Lord's at 10pm; it closes at 10.30. They are due at Newmarket at 1am and Moreton Morrell at 4.15am.

DAVID JONES goes for his sixth world title on Monday in Garthorpe, near Osett. He comes from Meltham, near Huddersfield, works in a dyehouse factory, is a part-time fireman and is competing this year in the national fell-running series. But he goes to Garthorpe as world coo carrying champion.

The race dates from a bet forged in the Beehive Inn in 1888. It has been annual since. Thirty women or fewer will run from the Royal Oak 1,012 metres uphill to the maypole by the Beehive. The men carry a 50kg sack of coal weight — it used to be a hundredweight — and a 20kg sack. On Sunday seven sewers will be sewing sacks against spillage.

ASTRANGE result appeared in the Southern Division of the Beazer Homes League on Wednesday: Tonbridge Angels 0, Poole Town 2. Poole had lost all 38 games this season — 33 league and five cup. It seemed too good to be true. It was. Tonbridge won 5-0, as faked by the league secretary to the Press Association. So Poole are at home to Beshley tomorrow with the Guinness Book of Records beckoning. The longest sequence of league defeats is 39 by Stockport United in the Stockport League in 1978.

EDWIN ROBINSON, the 25-year-old boxer mentioned last week who was so keen on a professional career that he named the ticket office before taking the ring, won his first professional fight on Tuesday on points. He has quickly got the hang of his new business. Yesterday he announced his retirement.

Snooker

Higgins has to sweat

Clive Everton in Plymouth

JOHN HIGGINS, the defending champion, and the title favourite Stephen Hendry took contrasting routes to the last 16 of the British Open here yesterday.

Higgins had to recover from a 4-3 down to deny Mansfield's Jason Ferguson a famous victory. "I was shaking all the way through my last break," Higgins admitted after his concluding 39 set up a 5-4 victory and a third-round match with Trowbridge's former English amateur champion Stephen Lee.

Hendry, without a ranking title success in 1995, went out to meet Joe Swail for the third time in a month two hours behind schedule. But he soon put the tournament back on track for time with an easy 5-1 success in what he described later as "a pretty dire match".

Hendry's best break was a modest 36. He plays Nigel Bond today.

The delay was due to a match of epic proportions featuring Peter Ebdon and Dennis Taylor. After a controversial final frame when the snookered Taylor was called for five successive misses by referee Colin Brind, Ebdon held his nerve to win 5-4.

Hockey

Europe test for Guildford

Pat Rowley

GUILDFORD's men and Hightown's women, last year's domestic cup winners, represent England in the European Cup Winners' Cup over the next four days — the men in The Hague and the women in Rotterdam. It is Guildford's first time in Europe as there was no Cup Winners' Cup when they last won the FA Cup in 1978.

Hightown, however, are old Europe hands. They recently won a bronze medal in the European Indoor Championships for the second time and they were silver-medal winners in the Cup Winners' Cup on their previous appearance three years ago.

England have collected a medal in all five previous Cup Winners' competitions and Hightown's target is to emulate Sutton, who took gold in 1982. The Wirral-based club will have to rid themselves of the tensions that prevented them putting the National League title out of everyone's reach last weekend.

But even without the injured Chris Cook they should head their group from Dinamo Saba (Ukraine), Libertas Saba (Italy) and Rotterdam. If they do so, they are likely to meet Berliner. Guildford, with Danny Hall, Ian Jennings and Don Williams in attack, should finish first or second in their group after playing Ekaterinburg (Russia), Bohemians Prague and the German newcomers Durlkheimer.

Richard Jago in Cardiff

CHRIS WALKER, one of the squad that won England men's first world title last year, became the third home hope to crash out of an increasingly unpredictable Leekes British Open here yesterday.

The No. 6 seed from Essex was in trouble from the start against the creative Frenchman Julien Bonetat and was beaten 16-13, 15-9, 12-15, 15-8 to join the

national champion Peter Nicol and the England No. 1 Del Harris in defeat.

Walker found Bonetat severe on anything that was not tight or deep in length, and never recovered his momentum after narrowly failing to peg back a five-point deficit in the opening game.

Bonetat hit nicks and clinging volley-drops with increasing daring, retrieved as nimbly as a squirrel and played to a more consistent length

than he used to. He also showed composure — not previously his strong suit — while Walker grew fretful and argumentative.

Walker said something to earn a code-of-conduct warning after a third-game collision in which he hurt his nose, and then saw his 9-4 lead become 9-10. He fought his way back to pinch that game, telling the referee as he came off: "Did you give me a warning? He told you to go and piss and you did nothing."

Walker struggled to 5-4 in the fourth game, stepping up his criticism of the refereeing as he did, but Bonetat surged to 9-5 and 13-6 and won the match with a quickly flamboyant three-ball boast which rolled dead from the nick.

He now plays Nicol's surprise conqueror Paul Johnson, who beat his fellow Englishman Tony Hands. The Englishwomen Fiona Geaves and Cassie Jackman earned a quarter-final meeting.

Why punters back cart horses, page 13

Match of many a day, page 14

Rugby loses patience, page 13

Two more join select band, page 15

SportsGuardian

NEW RESEARCH QUESTIONS HYPED HEALTH SUPPLEMENT

Olympic warning on wonder fuel

Athletes risk kidney damage

Duncan Mackay

CREATINE, the food compound hailed by athletes as a wonder substance and marketed as the legal, safe alternative to anabolic steroids, is not as effective as claimed and may be harmful, doctors at the British Olympic Association have warned.

The BOA's Medical Commission, which has conducted extensive research over four years, yesterday said that, if taken in too large quantities, creatine may lead to kidney damage. The commission has refused to endorse or encourage the use of creatine supplements.

"The effects are unquantifiable but many natural substances, taken in excess, are dangerous," said Dr Frank Newton, a member of the commission.

Ever since Linford Christie gave some credit to the product after winning the 1992 Olympic 100 metres it has been the most hyped health supplement on the market. Creatine has also been used by Colin Jackson, Wigan's rugby league players, the British Lions rugby union teams and the oarsmen, the

Searle brothers. It is believed that at least half of Britain's Olympic team this year will have used it during training. "It is something you use but you're not sure what is happening," said Jackson. "You're not 100 per cent sure what difference it is making. But you don't want to change a winning formula." Even the England cricket team took a supply on their tour to South Africa.

Some athletes have taken it in dosages of up to 30 grams per day — the equivalent of 300lb of steak. Brian Welsby, a biochemist who has been studying the effect of creatine on performance, said yesterday that body builders are already suffering illness because they have taken too much creatine.

"We have every indication that for sports people who supplement their diet with pure creatine, only about 10 per cent of the creatine is available for use in the muscles. As a result the other 90 per cent will be rapidly excreted. This will put pressure on the kidneys."

Creatine is a naturally occurring compound produced by the liver and stored in the brain, skeletal and cardiac muscle, sperm and certain cells of the immune system. Combined with phosphate, it acts as a rapidly accessible energy store for muscles.

Creatine supplements were developed for use in welfare application with the elderly and infirm. But research four years ago claimed it showed huge benefits to those involved in intensive activity, postponing fatigue, improving speed of recovery and preventing post-exercise soreness — precisely the same kind of effects anabolic steroids give.

The country's biggest supplier, Maximuscle UK, said yesterday that it had no reports of athletes using creatine suffering side-effects. "Everything has its dangers if not taken correctly," said Zef Eisenberger. "We recommend to our customers that they don't take creatine for more than two months without giving their body a rest."

However, the BOA questions its effectiveness. It says that athletes should get enough creatine from a normal balanced diet. "It doesn't follow if you have more than your daily requirement you are going to be better off," said Dr Newton.

Sally Gunnell, who tried the supplement before she won the Olympic 400m hurdles gold, came off it after Barcelona because she did not believe it worked.

Others remain convinced of its value. "I have noticed the effects in training and I don't think it's dangerous as long as it's taken correctly," said Mark Richardson, Britain's 400m runner.

The IAAF currently has no plans to add creatine to its prohibited list of substances.



Gunnell... experimented



Jackson... 'It is something you use but you're not sure what is happening'

PHOTOGRAPH: STEWART KENDALL

Hall hits out at Keegan critics

Cynthia Bateman

NEWCASTLE's chairman Sir John Hall yesterday told critics of Kevin Keegan to back the manager or "stay away" from the rest of the club's run-in to the championship.

Sir John defended Keegan, who insisted after Newcastle's last-minute defeat at Liverpool on Wednesday that he will not change his attacking policy, and at the same time attacked the growing number of disgruntled fans condemning Keegan's decisions. Many claim that the 27.5 million Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla's arrival has unbalanced a winning team.

Newcastle's chairman has no sympathy for the whingers. "Stay away if you don't want to back Kevin," he said. "I've got no time for the moaners and I have been appalled at the criticism."

"The vast majority of our fans are truly magnificent but we don't want the knockers at St James' Park when we play Queens Park Rangers on Saturday."

"Kevin has said he would rather quit than play any differently. Well, he knows what he's doing. He has got us where we are. He has made Newcastle one of the top teams and the club has come a long way in a short time."

"The game at Liverpool was probably the best match anyone has seen in years. To lose to a last-minute goal was incredibly cruel. It has given the edge to Manchester United. But look where we have been all season playing Kevin's way. The players must be drained and they need 100 per cent backing to lift them again."

Keegan said he did not feel as disappointed with the dramatic defeat at Anfield as "perhaps I should," explaining: "Every player on both sides gave his all. In my time as manager I've never known a team play that well and not win."

David Lacey, page 14

Tastier than ass's hoof, less dangerous than strychnine

FOR centuries athletes have been seeking an edge in performance, writes Duncan Mackay. A favourite brew taken up by competitors in the ancient Olympics was said to have been the hooves of an Abyssinian ass, ground up, boiled in oil and flavoured with rose hips and rose petals. Around the turn of the last century, bizarre mix-

tures of strychnine, caffeine, alcohol and egg-white were in vogue.

Creatine is just the latest in a long line of supposedly performance-enhancing substances, following the likes of salt tablets, ginseng, royal jelly and bee pollen. The Drugs Hotline at the Sports Council regularly fields calls from athletes who want to know if they can safely use new products available by mail order that promise to be the missing ingredient in their training.

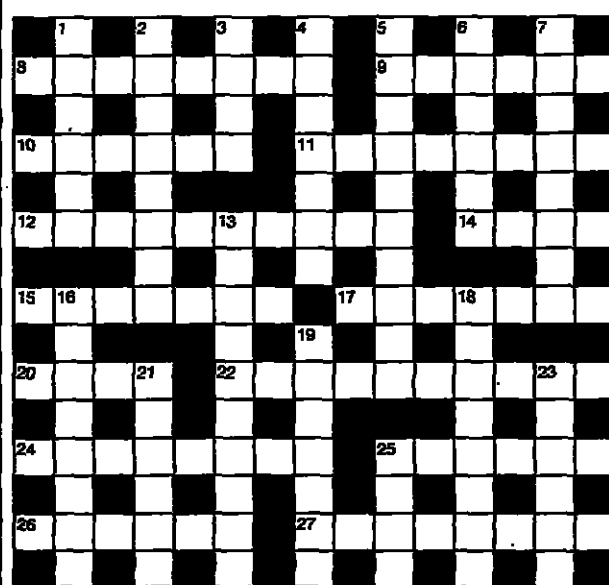
Healthy food and proper training, it seems, are not enough: athletes spend their lives seeking a kind of magic that will make years

of training pay off in victory. Various "natural" foods, vitamin concoctions, amino acids, protein substitutes and energy drinks have become huge sellers.

Frank Bruno and Nigel Benn, during the build-up to their recent world-title fights, admitted to taking up to 150 vitamin pills each day. It is the eternal story that no one likes to concede anything to rivals.

Frank Shorter, the 1972 Olympic marathon champion, once said: "If I know someone is running 100 miles a week, then I'll do 200 and, if I know he's taking two vitamin tablets, I'll take four."

Guardian COLLINS Easter Prize Crossword No 20,619



Set by Araucaria

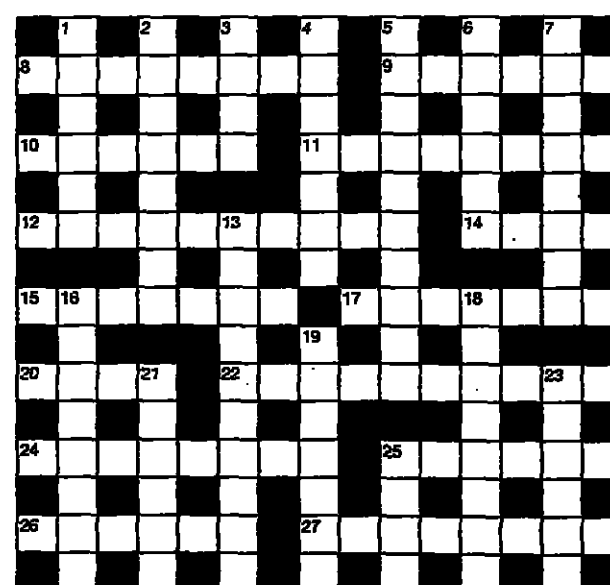
But fifty Easters faced the Lad:
Now fifty more has Shropshire had.
Around the squares then you must go
From 1 to 8, to see the snow.
(9,2,5,3,6,3,2,4,4,5,5,3,5)

At each number the clues to the two solutions have been arranged in such a way that while the definition part of the clue belonging to diagram A always comes before that to diagram B, the subsidiary indications of each may occur in any position.

Across

- 8 We shall have got dressed in commonplace place of our own, which motherless prophet leads (4,4; 4-4)
- 9 Fruit for a grandmother, as policemen find one on lake (8; 6)
- 10 Where French fool backing large numbers separately will be too clever for girls of a hundred years ago (6; 6)
- 11 Money coming in collar with jewels in Queer Street, awkward situation without punishment (8; 8)
- 12 Worshipper of the dead emperor about a century afterwards surprising nurse — no fee needed (10; 10)
- 14 Tony's girl time removed

- 15 Receiver's charge for use of area, distance and time — it's criminal (7; 7)
- 17 Queen in trembling flesh personally missing at sign after steersman, the fool (7; 7)
- 20 Scottish island bearing strange inclination of farceur without ravers (4; 4)
- 22 Organic operation in the garden — remarkable man with Latin name interrupting friend (10; 10)
- 24 Peculiar case: dead Lamb's pork — arrangement about oven quietly to intensify (5; 3; 8)
- 25 Model sort of acid returned coloured pictures to merchant prince in Mozart opera (6; 6)

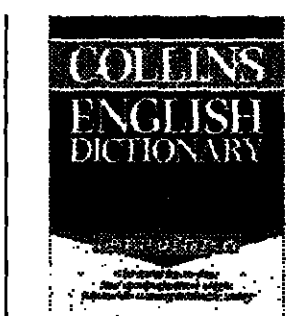


- 26 African cooking hot pie stopped call for prohibition (6; 4,2)
- 27 I fix myself a fresh start: boy or girl? Put back the French with six times as much opera by Mozart (8; 6)

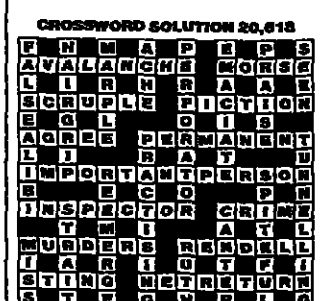
Down

- 1 Sticker in shelter bears a pod, something charged to Scotsman by Asiatic Greek (8; 6)
- 2 UnAmerican sort of charm to observe about tree of gold on coast, needing word with doll (3,5; 8)
- 3 Measure of current capital growth: look in the box brought up Horatio when on the telephone (4; 4)
- 4 Joins up international organisation's company to detach tin with less trouble (7; 7)
- 5 Request before closing time in food stores, drunken sot getting no grog on or off from crater (4,6; 10)
- 6 I ad three wickets running relating to medicine important people studied at Oxford (6; 6)

- 7 Ormer, a tree that grows by a billboard: with rough tug we rear organ — what's it like? (3-5; 5,3)
- 13 Prepare to fume at frivolous primate without good brain — applying cane no help (5,1,4; 10)
- 16 What's new about Eastern part of the Bible? Chorister in The Choir has a brief hour digesting Western translation of Weber's opera (8; 4-4)
- 18 A matter of course: roughly macerate rich repeat, upsetting friend's transport (8; 5,3)



- 19 Like an old witch seen off by American unions, the chief of puddings needs hot groundsel or ragwort (7; 7)
- 21 Flexible filler African nomad starts chewing in the Mantua region (8; 6)
- 23 Requirement for the French to irritate first fleet on the edge of battle in World War I (6; 8)
- 25 Spoil elevated words written by former partner in races — a mere instrument (4; 4)



A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first ten correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,619, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 2AX, by first post on Friday Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday April 15.

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